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Constructing the Uninhabited Home: Participant Experience of Nature During and Following a Wilderness Program

Randolph Brent DeLay

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring, 1996

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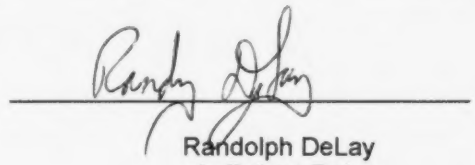

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Dr. Glenda Hanna

Dr. David Whitson

Dr. Patricia Rafferty

Traveller, there is no road. We construct the road on the journey.

Chinese Proverb

The true role of a teacher is not to take you anywhere, but to help you pay attention to where you already are.

Dr. Beverly DeAngelis
quoted in The Edmonton Journal
Saturday, 21 October, 1995 p. B-5.

ABSTRACT

The experience of eight teenage participants on a twelve day wilderness trip was investigated through participant observation and semi-structured interviewing. This wilderness program was organized for promoting care for self and others but ineffectual in promoting care for the earth. The experience of the social group dominated. Participants operated to balance exploring the unfamiliar and maintaining contact with the familiar, leading to tacit norms to stay with the group and that deliberate attention to the natural world was odd. The teens also conceptualized Nature as a place--undisturbed, unfamiliar, 'out there,' without people or human development, relaxing and with a sense of freedom and--a reality fundamentally different and removed from their home realities of 'civilization.' This construction of the natural world may be reinforced by the wilderness trip. Recommendations are included for programming wilderness trips to promote care of the environment at home.

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The engagement of doing this research and writing this work has proven an engrossing encounter with the act of creating, and a test of stamina. I could not have done it without the people above. Finally, thanks to the eight young men and woman who went on a venture of Wilderness Explorations. To all of you, grin at life and go in peace.

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Constructing the Uninhabited Home:
Participant Experience of Nature During and Following a Wilderness Program

I remember strolling Jasper's Skyline trail high above timber line. A summer storm was blowing in fast. I too moved speedily--shelter was a long way down the ridge. Huge raindrops pelted the dust of the path, the adjacent heather and me. I exulted, realizing the vitality that life knows only when it is pressed by more elemental forces. "It is good to be alive!" I shouted dozens of times, emphasizing different words, bellowing it to the winds. Only when the hailstones reached a painful size did I seek shelter to watch dark clouds pass overhead and recede beyond the eastern ranges.

In years past I lived in Missoula, Montana. Every morning before seven I would roll out of bed, pull on shoes, clothes and a jacket and take a morning walk. It was an easy discipline. Up the neighbourhood streets and down the alleyways I strolled to start the day. As the seasons rolled through town I watched the chickadees welcome back finches to create cacophonous symphony in the pines. When the trees budded, the sun began rising earlier than I did so that only the pink sky remained from a once splendid sunrise. Gentle summer breezes brought odours of garbage along with dogwood blossom. Then in winter the sometimes bitter chill kept the woodsmoke settled thickly into the valley in which the city snuggled. My feet splashed throughout the year in rain puddles, new snow, blown newspapers and the varied hues of fallen leaves. I watched cedar waxwings eat fermented berries in the fall. I startled at barking dogs and lumbering garbage trucks and waited for the automobile traffic to begin. It was a prayerful, meditative time. I felt connected to the town even though as a student I would soon be gone. And even here amidst the concrete and asphalt, there was natural space. The air blew into my lungs as the sun swung into the sky.

Many other experiences come to mind. The point is that the natural world speaks to some part deep inside me. I take frequent wilderness trips--both to challenge myself and to connect this inner nature and the world. I settle into different time patterns than in human dominated environments. The outdoors provokes reflection--the chance to think and breathe deeply while my body gets worked. And I return from the wilderness refreshed and re-created, with a greater motivation to care for the earth and people--to follow the lifestyle in which I say I believe. The natural world is many things, but above all it promotes a powerful, restorative sense of connection to something much greater than myself. I freely admit the mystical quality of this expression.

Length of time spent in the natural setting is not always a factor in finding this perspective. I have done three week trips and have had equally powerful weekend trips. Just the other day, a friend and I walked the river valley for only a couple of hours, watching the sun set and night creep over the ice floes. This time also was relaxing, serene and re-energizing. There have been times in the natural environment when I could never 'get in tune' and had to leave the woods for the social interactions of being with other people. But those experiences do not negate the powerful relationship that I have been able to developed with the natural world in general and certain places in particular.

This relationship guides much of what I do and provokes an intense concern for wilderness preservation and the general health of the planet. I have been active in environmental issues and care about them passionately. My concern arises from a sense of moral responsibility to the Creator and the planet, but also as an outgrowth of my need for, and enjoyment of, natural places.

One more story may illuminate. It was the last semester of my last year of high school. I was heading off to the university as a history major. Sure, I had been outside a lot in my life to that point, playing in the woods near our home, then camping and backpacking with the Boy Scouts in the eastern woodlands of Pennsylvania and New York. But then I took an Ecology course from Mr. Miller. We learned about the ecological principles that govern the planet. We debated environmental issues and discussed larger societal factors. And we did field trips, climbing on the boulders as we watched the birds in the morning. I still remember my enthusiasm as I saw brightly-hued Blackburnian Warblers and Pine Grosbeaks for the first time. Along with that came the scraped knuckles of hands crammed into cracks and a group closeness from our shared experience. No other class in my school years stands so vividly in my mind. And from those experiences in that course, an interest was birthed that became a career.

Why the Interest?

I come to this research as a practitioner with more than a decade spent leading adventure programs in the mountains, desert, woodlands and rivers. I wonder what is happening on those trips I lead. I know what these settings do to me. What happens with my students?

I am a wilderness educator. I knew early in my career that I did not enjoy being merely an outdoor recreation leader. Teaching the skills of rock-climbing, for example, bored me without the personal engagement of the activity as an experience with other lessons also.

I wanted to teach *for* the outdoors and the environment instead of merely in it. So as I taught, I tried to connect the experiences to the person: Grow as a person--become more compassionate, confident, self-aware--and care for the planet. For the last four years I have worked for Pacific Crest Outward Bound School on three-week backpack trips with teens. I have also taught environmental education in churches, camps, schools and outdoor centres.

My personal goal--professional and academic--**is to develop and implement adventure-based outdoor programs that help participants learn to treat the earth, each other and themselves with greater respect.**

Everything I want to do revolves around this goal. I am convinced that we humans need significant changes in lifestyles, societal structures and worldview. We live in a violent world where people feel alienated from themselves and others and are doing serious damage to the earth. I do not believe the ways we live are sustainable over the next few generations. In short, these changes are what I mean by an 'ecologically sensitive' lifestyle.

While people experience the natural world in different ways--their experience and construction of it filtered through conceptual screens, reconstructed memory and prior experiences--it is incumbent to recognize that the ways we view nature does matter. The earth's functioning is being stressed by the collective and individual actions of humans. This implies a need for ethical reflection about underlying views and the way we live these out as individuals and societies. This deliberation is, I would suggest, far more fundamental than laws and regulations.

The stories above begin to describe what I mean by nature and environment. Although at first I would associate 'nature' with wild, undisturbed land, I am keenly aware that no places are removed from the effects of human activity. Air pollution from coastal cities weakens trees in the high mountains and PCBs float into the Arctic from sources that are thousands of miles away.

Ecologically sensitive lifestyles include understanding my/our place on the earth and living in the land and according to the guidance of ecological integrity. Even in the built environments of city and suburb we still feel wind, breathe air, drink water that flows through the hydrological cycle. My view of nature, therefore, is as something that entwines throughout the existence of every thing. We are part of the environment--that web of interrelationships between all biotic and abiotic elements (Rickliffs, 1993). Nature is not just a backdrop upon which humans act out the dramas of *our* history. We are only a latter chapter of the sixteen-billion year Universe Story (Berry & Swimme, 1992).

In going to natural settings such as the Skyline Trail, I am reminding myself that I too am a part of what is nature, recognizing anew the connection of myself with the rest of creation. This is my sense of place in the grand scheme of things. Twenty years ago Willi Unsoeld, mountaineer and Outward Bound instructor, recognized one role of wilderness experience as promoting a type of "cosmic humility":

> A sense of ultimate dependence on forces outside our own... [that] straightens you up to look at the world with new eyes. The chance is of a truly compassionate existence... [and] an ultimate sense of joy at having a part in this complex world of ours (Unsoeld, 1975).

I am first and foremost an outdoor educator. I wanted my research to be practical, helping myself and other instructors. As I read most of the research in environmental education and wilderness adventure programs little of it seemed to be directly useful to an instructor desiring to run better and more effective programs. Most of the research seems to bear a latent assumption that change can be effected by a 'treatment': as a student once told me, "like you're trying to pull open the top of my head and pour in your stuff." I hope to show later why I do not believe this is appropriate or possible. Instead, I want to try to seek an understanding of particular participants and their unique experience in the hopes of informing my own and other instructors' wilderness leadership practice.

It is often assumed that wilderness programs have a potential to educate for the environment.

> Program participants witness their dependence upon the natural elements, and discover their natural kinship with, for example, squirrels and hawks. This is not some mystical pantheism but simply an opportunity for participants to see clearly the part of themselves that is a creature of the earth and to experience in all its simplicity and cruelty the natural struggle for survival (Zook, 1986, p. 56).

Unfortunately, I doubt many programs approach such lofty goals. The real goal of wilderness programming would seem to me to be to help participants develop their own consciousness to ecological concerns that upon their return home results in a more ecologically-sensitive lifestyle. Indoctrination and specific rules would be less important than developing this awareness and the personal character to apply it to everyday living (Simpson, 1993). The reality of environmental education is that each participant lives in a different context; there are innumerable ways to construe the wilderness experience. Furthermore, there are numerous ways to try to live in an ecologically sensitive fashion. Individuals are required to make a myriad of decisions and compromises. The complexity of modern life

requires a value system founded in an "informed heart" rather than either a list of rules or emotionalism (Bettelheim, 1960).

What's the Question?

Environmental education is value-laden, beginning with the premise that people need to develop an awareness of the environmental problems that then transfers into action. The need for action rather than merely awareness becomes more important as the planet wheezes and groans into massive climatic change, loss of biological and genetic diversity, declining ecosystemic integrity, rising inability to sustain human life and a soaring sense of alienation within people. Wilderness programs often overtly state care for the environment as a desired outcome. Because participants are in an environment where natural rhythms and systems dominate without extensive mediation through human control, people usually expect that participation on a wilderness trip inclines the individual towards increased care for the earth. For some participants the trip may be a significant life experience, an incident in a chain towards developing a sensitivity to the natural world and about environmental concerns. I will always remember my first long backpack trip. It was a nine-day adventure in the mountains of New Mexico with the Boy Scouts. The memory lingers. Now, as an instructor, I want to know how participants use their experience of a wilderness-based adventure program to inform ecologically sensitive lifestyles. The basic purpose of this project is **to investigate the developing relationship of the participants with the natural world during a wilderness trip and how this understanding is transferred home following the trip.**

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE: THE EXPERIENCE OF NATURE

Environmental problems and issues have received tremendous amounts of media attention in recent years. Although wilderness and environmental activism existed earlier, Rachael Carson's Silent Spring in 1962 has often been described as the beginning of the public environmental movement in North America (Whisenhunt, 1973). The three decades since have seen the waxing and waning of attention, but unlike other social issues that had their time in the media glare--such as the civil rights movement, hunger, and specific peace issues--environmental concern has remained strong in public consciousness. In the mid-1990s global warming, destruction of old-growth forests, hazardous waste and other environmental issues appear to be part of the common knowledge of North Americans.

The contemporary environmental movement is tremendously diverse--ranging from suitcoat-clad political lobbyists for the Sierra Club and Canadian Wildlife Federation to mothers concerned about their children's health, tree-hugging 'granolas' and the eco-saboteurs of Earth First!. Within such a diversity, conceptions such as 'nature' and 'environment' will clearly connote different notions to different people. In this chapter I will briefly look at some of these social constructions. I will also investigate some of the literature on 'sense of place' and time which may inform the connection with the natural world individuals may hope to develop on a wilderness trip. Finally, the chapter will close with an investigation into pedagogical issues in the field of outdoor and experiential education.

The Construction of Nature

The very notions of 'nature' or 'the environment' is conceived in the human mind. These are constructs, or ways in which individuals and groups organize experience into categories (Robertson, 1994). Bannister and Fransella (1980) insist that behaviour is related to the person and that to understand behaviour we must understand the personal constructs or the meaning that the person attaches to the behaviour. However, individuals are also influenced by their social context in the development of these constructions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Interaction creates a social order according to Berger and Luckmann. In order to make sense of the world and interact together in a predictable manner, the members of a social order develop a "common stock of knowledge" that describes how and why to do things. By acting in concert with their understanding of this shared knowledge individuals continue to refine their roles and solidify the commonly held knowledge. This enables a

collective of individuals to hold to similar constructions and understand them as meaningful within their social context. This becomes their social reality. However, all individuals live with unreflective or taken-for-granted knowledge. Also, since individuals view their portion of the collective understanding, their roles, and the institutions of society from slightly different positions, and since the roles and contexts an individual finds her or himself in changes, individuals could be said to function within multiple realities (Schutz, 1973). It is important to emphasize that this "social construction of reality" is a way of considering the manner in which people understand their everyday experience rather than an establishment of empirical actuality. Constructivism is a way of knowing the world, thus blurring any epistemology-ontology distinction.

With this understanding, Di Chiro (1987, p. 25) writes, "the environment is not something that has a reality totally outside or separate from ourselves and our social milieux... Environmental problems are... socially constructed as problems because of their effects on human individuals and groups." Ozone depletion, for example, was not considered a 'problem' by most people until its' contribution to the likelihood of skin cancer was demonstrated. Robbottom (1991, p. 21) discusses a modern example of the construction of a concept.

> 'Ecology' is often treated as a means of perceiving the environment as it 'really exists out there' in a purportively objective sense, in a way that separates 'the ecology' from personal, political and social values. Ecology is transmitted to students as a series of [scientific] propositions... embedded in texts that do not discuss the social, cultural and historical context.

Constructs could be seen in a relativistic sense--that society constructs what is morally acceptable. This is an essential concern that we must return to later.

Terms such as 'nature,' and 'environment' and 'wilderness' convey different connotations for people. Language is truly one of the most fundamental social constructions and is used to help organize conceptualizations or worldviews (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tuan, 1991). The Hebrews, for example, much like North American aboriginals and unlike the Greeks and our own society, did not have a word--and consequently a concept-- that categorized nature as a separate thing from their God and themselves (Kay, 1988). A multiplicity of terms abound, including natural world, environment, nature, cosmos, earth, land, place. The word 'creation,' for example resonates with me and conveys a creative force behind the world I experience--that the world does not stand alone, and that as a created being I have an inherent connection and moral responsibility.

The Western World View

Many writers have written of the western worldview. Since Canadian society is primarily a result of these historical influences, the following summary will concentrate on western constructions of nature. Merchant (1980) convincingly documents the re-imaging of Nature that occurred from the twelfth century in Europe. She calls this the "death of nature" and blames the rise of a mechanistic model of the world for contributing to the view that matter is passive and inert and proscribed by so-called natural laws. Merchant blames the increasingly detached observer role in the scientific method for limiting consciousness and vitality to all but humans. An alternative view supplanted during the scientific revolution was that matter possesses an inherent liveliness, organicism or vitality. In Greek Stoic and European medieval thought an animating force was present in matter--the *anima mundi*. This semi-respectable devotional figure became the Mother Nature of popular imagination. As the mechanistic model was popularized Nature was a figure to be manipulated, sometimes forcibly, thus linking the domination of nature to other forms of domination such as male over female (Merchant, 1980; Porteous, 1990).

For Merchant and other authors, the objectification of nature has legitimized human use and abuse of the planet. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (1984) traces the Enlightenment glorification of human accomplishments as an important contributor. He also adds that the separation of Nature from traditional theological categories that was influenced by the scientific revolution and Enlightenment periods of European history. Granberg-Michaelson disagrees with White's (1967) accusation of Christianity as the root cause of the ecological crisis. White suggested that this religion is too human-centred to respect nature and that it effectively de-sacralized the natural world by overemphasis on divine transcendence and persecution of other, more earth-friendly religious traditions. Granberg-Michaelson summarizes the arguments made by biblical, historical, theological and cultural scholars to demonstrate that Christianity is not the *only* cause of environmental problems. Furthermore, he shows that religion does have resources for more positive human relations with the rest of creation, in part because of the perspective of relationship of humans and the rest of creation and the consequent moral response.

Evernden (1992, 1985) also describes how nature is objectified in our society. Using Buber's (1952/1970) categories, Evernden says nature is seen as an 'It' rather than as a 'You.'[1] A You has intrinsic value and is to be respected and treated morally. An It can be

---

[1]Some translators of Buber will use 'Thou' instead of the more colloquial 'You.'

used with little thought of the consequences to the object itself. "The word 'I-You' establishes the world of relation. Thus relation is primary" (Evernden, 1985, p. 56).

Evernden uses these categories to show that constructions of Nature depend in part on a person's experience of the world and how one fundamentally views this interaction. Language contributes to this engagement. "The very creation of the word 'nature' engendered an apparent dualism in the world: all is nature or not-nature. And since the 'not-nature' has come to mean essentially 'humanity' our relationship to the earth has seemed equivocal" (Evernden, 1992, p. 84). Language has a powerful influence in supporting and reinforcing social conceptions. When I first began climbing mountaineers often mentioned "conquering the peak," a reflection of an attitude of domination that I hear less commonly with that group of outdoor enthusiasts now. More often I hear a quote attributed to John Muir: "We do not conquer the mountains, we are only permitted to walk on them."

Evernden writes that a contrast develops between Nature-as-different-from-us and us-as-part-of-nature. He postulates that the latter stance removes the distinctiveness of humans as thinking and acting moral beings because conventions derived from evolutionary ethics or natural law have not shown much durability. However, with the human/nature dichotomy in place Nature as a source of 'higher' standards can be acceptably maintained. For this reason Evernden calls humans the "natural alien." To illustrate this, minimum impact camping practices used in wilderness and backcountry areas often call for every morsel of food to be picked up, to avoid trampling grass, and not use or consume even a stick for a fire. It is intriguing to me that campers will accept a more severe standard of behaviour in a natural setting and yet act very differently once they have left it. Evernden concludes eventually that we are conceptually imprisoned and must give up understanding "Nature." On the other hand, authors like Berry and Swimme (1991) argue alienation from the planet is an impossibility. This is a notion to which we shall return in the discussion about sense of place.

Wilderness and Nature In North America.

Western society is rapidly becoming the dominant cultural form in the world. As such, the western worldview is a consolidating influence. Historically, the exploration of the new continents of the Americas as well as the exploitation of Africa and Asia was done with the perception of nature as a resource to be used for humanity's benefit (Whisenhunt, 1973). Nash (1967) is unnecessarily harsh on anti-wilderness sentiments in early America. Alternative views about the roots of the early negative views of wilderness exist (Bratton,

1993). Emigrating to a new land is difficult, particularly if the familiar resources of the old place are not available. Nash also entirely ignores the native peoples in his treatment of the concept of wilderness in America. Particularly in Canada, the Indian and Inuit influence on the French and Scots associated with the Hudson Bay Company seemed to have mellowed the antagonism towards 'wild' lands (Newman, 1985).

Still, Nash's study is a useful examination of the often ambiguous views of wilderness and nature in North America. American Manifest Destiny, which occurred to a similar if lesser extent in Canada, tended to see the land as something to be conquered. The roots of this attitude go back to unbridled mercantilism and post-medieval exaltation of human endeavour (Granberg-Michaelson, 1984). American perceptions often also saw the wilderness as a fearful place and contrasted it to settled lands. But even early in colonial history some voices, such as eighteenth century Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards, argued that somehow wilderness experience was indispensable for the character development of the early colonists on the American continent (Zimmerman, 1993; Bratton, 1993). Thoreau, Muir and Abbey and others seem to voice this notion as well in the romantic notions of wilderness that was propagated in the nineteenth centuries' transcendentalist movement. Nash notes that most of the early appreciation of wilderness came from city dwellers, who began to see their domiciles as 'jungles' (Nash, 1967). In consequence, civilization and wilderness were set in opposition to each other, but in the reverse manner from the earlier history of the continent. There still tends to be a rural-urban and eastern-western split in North America regarding wilderness preservation.

In 1964, the United States passed The Wilderness Act which gave legal protection to tracts of land. Wilderness was defined, in part, "in contrast with those areas where man (sic) and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The act has been modified slightly since and management decisions modify the land further. Nash (1967, p. 5) summarizes the ambiguity of wilderness: "Americans can easily see wild country as both asset and enemy. National pride stems from both *having* and *destroying* wilderness."

Wilson (1991) offers a comprehensive look at North American constructions of nature, wilderness and environment, particularly during the postwar period of the twentieth century. Wilson describes the North American experience of nature as a series of built and managed environments. Referring to landscape design and mall construction with its potted trees and dolphin tanks, Wilson asserts "people begin to experience nature as something

manipulated, altered, composed by humans" (p. 108). Even backcountry enthusiasts carry in their portable homes, kitchens, bedrooms and closets, self-contained, with no need for the land itself except as a landscape upon which to move.[2]

Wilson describes how advertising uses nature to create images--witness the preponderance of animal names of automobiles, particularly the sexy, sporty ones like *Jaguar*--and the circular effect of the products reconceptualizing nature. Thumb through a magazine and see how 'natural' images are used to sell products. I turned on the television a moment ago. The first commercial was an Air Canada vignette of a plane flying over gorgeous mountain scenery to one city after another. Nature and the cities are both part of the Canadian landscape. The implication, however, seemed to be that people live in the one, and the other they pass over.

Wildlife films of the 1950s and early 1960s sentimentalized and anthropomorphized nature. In recent decades films have changed to present a purportedly 'scientific' natural history about the animal, while providing a plot that emphasizes the heroic rescue provided by human science. The image of nature is of something that still flourishes, albeit on the fringes of society. Says Wilson,

> Environmental educators, government agencies and corporate public relations departments all make claims on our understandings of nature and its place in our everyday lives. By the mid-twentieth century, it seemed nature had to be explained to its human inhabitants, it was not enough to try to experience it (p. 53).

Undeniably, the rise of extensive automobile use has created changes in the social fabric of both Canada and the United States. For one thing, Wilson accuses the automobile of permitting the colonization of large tracts of far-off bush. The move to the country, and in Canada, the popularity of the cabin by the lake, are part of a psychic need for nostalgia, simplicity, and affirmation of self/land connection, he says. The tourist industry, its development encouraged by the corporate world in subtly intentional ways, transposed scenic value into monetary worth (Wilson, p. 42). Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) note that although there are many ways of 'being away,' Nature is unusual in its widespread appeal. National parks, lakes, and other natural places are by far the most popular destination spots.

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[2]As an example, the issue of Snowcountry: The Magazine of Mountain Living that graces my bedside table has an ad for a Nissan Pathfinder four wheel vehicle. Apparently, says the ad copy, the vehicle is "ideally suited for fishing trips and other outdoor adventures....Of particular interest may be its 130 watt, 8-speaker stereo system, whose remarkable sound system..." would certainly compete well with birdsong, river babble and even human conversation.

Even Disney World is packaged around a giant artificial mountain complete with hired climbers.

Wilson comments that since the end of World War II there have been two primary forms of land use: either total development or total preservation. The argument of his book is that we must understand ourselves in nature, not outside it. "One thing has become clear; ecological thinking cannot form the sole basis for social theory or political action. Restoring the land must also mean making a place for ourselves within it" (Wilson, 1991, p. 80).

I am convinced that the ways we think are embodied in the ways that we act and vice versa. Lifestyle reflects the "values possessed" rather than the "values professed." These values are not held in isolation from the social setting in which they are formed. However, these latter ideals move a person towards coordinating the current experience of everyday life with an ideal version. There is a wide diversity of eco-philosophical approaches that advocate new patterns of relationship between humans and environment. In dominant North American perceptions Nature has been seen as something to be dominated or manipulated, as a resource with little or no value except to be used by humans (Evernden, 1985; Roszak, 1992; Dunlap & Van Liere, 1981). Finally, there is a gap or dichotomy with Man and Nature on separate sides. Humans are alienated from the earth and the community of life say many activists. Wilson (1991, p. 87) concludes that the environmental movement must "directly engage the social debate for the culture of nature--the ways we think, teach, talk about and construct the natural world--is as important a terrain for struggle as the land itself."

Sense of Place

Meisner (1995) describes several metaphors used by people in describing Nature. A popular one is that of Nature as home. It conveys a feeling of residency, which may suggest caring and taking care of the household. But not all people bother with housekeeping so this metaphor may not be a useful one. Meisner also suggests the metaphor portrays domestication and human management of the household. However, Nature as home does indicate the ecological principle that our species does dwell in the "community of life" of the planet. Rowe (1990), for example, has taken up this metaphor in his book, Homeplace. As a plant ecologist, Rowe roots human beings within ecological processes. For Rowe however, Earth in general, rather than specific places, is home for the human species.

How people understand the land, or place, is the province of geography. Within that discipline, it is the genre of humanistic geography that is best positioned to seek this understanding. Their approach emphasises the inner world and the constructed nature of

perceptions of place. "Landscape, whether in the physical environment or in the form of a painting, does not exist without an observer. Although the land exists, the *scape* is a projection of the human conscious" (Porteous, 1990).

Raffan (1992) characterized sense of place as "meaning a quality of space that lives in the minds and emotions of people who live there" (p. 21). J. Douglas Porteous' Landscapes of the Mind represents the importance of the sensual, the symbolic and the metaphorical in clarifying a sense of one's place. Senses such as smell and sound create emotive recollections. But it is metaphorical and symbolic realms that have more powerful relevance to a sense of place, according to Porteous. Summarizing the Inscape (a term borrowed from poet Gerard Manley Hopkins who used it initially to signify the inner beauty of nature to an observer) Porteous asserts that an individual's goal is to experience and understand the world, not just to gather facts about it. He continues this theme in a later chapter on Childscape. Surveying the research on environmental planning he concludes that instead of the over-constructed and safe playgrounds so popular now in city parks children need "loose parts" that they can modify and explore. Adventure comes from venturing forth from the home core and increasing knowledge of space.

The Homescape is the territorial core of human experience (Porteous, 1990), and, due to the proclivity for individuals to adapt their homes to their personalities, the symbol of the self. Speaking experientially, Tuan (1974) divides space into home/non-home. The fundamental dialectic in human experience then is home/away or 'man-moving' versus 'man-at-rest.' The motif "journey" links the two sides. Porteous (1990, p. 128) writes, "The strongest instinct is to go home again." This description of human experience presents interesting parallels with wilderness programming. Oftentimes, instructors intentionally utilize a journey motif, especially the heroic journey a la Odysseus. Two problems arise with this construction of home-ness. The first is that common to all dichotomies--human experience is rarely so simple. What lies between the home and not-home?

The second problem is that home is usually conceptualized as a place of safety and security. But for many people this is not the case. Domestic violence is an issue often hidden from the outside world. However, I do have the feeling that there is an idealization of 'home' that is evident even in many people who do not experience it in their own lives. I say this after two years as an urban street counsellor. Even abused children have a feeling that home should be secure; they look for safe places and often try to keep the home together even as the abuse continues. Divorce is usually disrupting to childrens' sense of security, even when

the relationship between parents had been acrimonious. But children seem to want the parents to stay together. The ideal of home remains even when the actuality does not.

Porteous continues by analyzing twentieth century novels and describes the city and civilization quite negatively. Both city and civilization add to the alienation felt by people in our century, he concludes. In summary, Porteous points beyond intellectualizing and ethical deliberation to relationship:

> In the long run, to avoid the deathscape [the city]... we need to leaven our over-scientized culture with a more intersubjectively loving relationship with the earth. We need, in short, to rediscover that feeling of oneness with the land which primitive societies and kids seem to have... before they become irrevocably socialized into a consumer society in which we pay others to live interesting lives for us (p. 202).

Humans need a relationship or affective bond with the land. This is the core of the notion of sense of place.

Sense of place is connected with a sense of self. Evernden (1985) suggests that the homelessness of humanity is the root cause of its environmental malignancy, a thought echoed by Haught (1991). Likewise, Porteous (1990) follows this theme:

> We are, at root, alienated, and thus estranged from our authentic possibilities... We are alienated too from a world we collectively have too much power over.... And we are alienated from ourselves as well as from others. Giddy with entertainment, sated with consumer goods and planned to death, we devote little time to the *paysage interieur*, the convoluted, intricate, and always rewarding landscape of our minds (p. xiv).

Beringer (1990) suggests that youth need to establish a sense of being, based in a sense of place that encompasses both their location in the social scheme of things as well as a connection with particular places. Other environmental educators have also mentioned the close relationship between knowing one's self and bonding with the natural world (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Reed, 1989; Roszak, 1992). In Horwood's (1991, p. 25) words, a sense of one's identity is an "antidote for alienation." Knowing oneself increases bonds of identification with the world, he writes, summarizing the deep ecological formulation of self-realization.

Commentators from diverse perspectives have discussed the need for internalization of the ecological connection of humans and the rest of the ecosystem (Abrams, 1985; Armstrong and Botzler, 1993; Birch, et al., 1991; Fox, 1991). I have assumed that the moral induction to care for the earth involves a sense of one's place in it. A popular artist earlier in the decade sang, "Hear me asking, where do I belong...[I'm] looking... for my place in the

world" (Smith, 1993). The connotation for the person involved is that knowing where he or she belongs in relation with other things around the person is part of knowing who she or he is. And that is important in knowing how to live well. Alienation involves distorted relations with self, others and place.

On the other hand, Berry (1991) declares that alienation is a cosmic impossibility: We may feel alienated but cannot truly *be* alienated. Berry suggests that the feeling of alienation illustrates unfamiliarity with our home--the planet of which we are a part. How people self-identify themselves may be the important issue. Raffan brings this idea back to earth, so to say, by suggesting that people do not become concerned and active in environmental issues until they begin to define themselves in terms of where they live (Raffan, 1990, 1992). He says there is no evidence that a sense of place would transfer from a wilderness excursion to the homeplace. This has critical implications for environmental education and wilderness programming. It hints that outdoor programs that take people elsewhere may have limited success in promoting ecological sensitivity because people will not connect with their own place of residence.

While sense of place is the term I have chosen to use, implying as it does a connection with locale as well as self, other words have been used. Tuan (1974) coined the word *topophilia* to connote the affective bonding that takes place. Knowles (1992) uses *geopiety* to indicate a responsiveness toward a place regarded as sacred. Along these lines, Wilson believes we can learn much from native cultures: "The resilience of those cultures comes, I believe, from a collective experience of the earth as home, as a place that is animated and sacred" (p. 69). From tremendously different points of view, other researchers and writers have concluded that wilderness-based spirituality is vital for individuals in modern society (Abrams, 1985; Bratton, 1993; Knowles, 1992; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; White Jr., 1967).[3]

Most of the literature dealing with sense of place looks at long term residents. Raffan's (1992) cross-cultural analysis of a region in the Northwest Territories is one of few sense-of-place studies that does not deal exclusively with residents. He spoke with many individuals of Dene and Inuit heritage, as well as Euro-Canadian dwellers and recreationists

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[3]The term 'spirituality' is used loosely to accommodate all these writers. Although approaching the subject in different fashions all are united by a feeling akin to what William James(1902/1952) termed the "noetic." This word denotes a strong feeling that there is something greater out there than oneself with which one can connect. Huxley (1945) called this an element in the "the perennial philosophy."

about the meaning that the Thelon Game Reserve held for them. Raffan outlined four ways in which people connected to the land, including through place names (*toponymic*), stories about places (*narrative*), and direct experience in those places (*experiential*). The fourth aspect was a deeply spiritual or mystical bonding Raffan termed the *numinous*. For his informants, this aspect only came with dependence upon the land for survival. He comments that, while he saw this attachment in a large number of research participants it was tacit rather than openly discussed. In Raffan's analysis this form of connection with the land was not available to recreationists passing through, except in the few in whom dire circumstances forced a quantum leap in intensity.

Raffan comments that for temporary visitors sense of place is more reflective of the person than a reflection of the land. "Traveller's accounts cast but one hook, the so-called external hook, catching fleeting impressions of a place seen through the lens of the expectations brought to the place by the travellers themselves" (Raffan, 1992, p. 366). He concludes, that dependence on the land or long time residence is necessary before "a person begins to define himself or herself in terms of the land [i.e., via the categories addressed above].... It seems that when a person comes to define himself or herself in terms of a given piece of land, it is then that the *sense* of this place is profound" (p. 376-7). The implication for wilderness programs is that they will have little success in fostering this experience of place. Wilderness programs are often focused on activities and travel, which may weaken the connection with the place. Other ethnographic researchers also report locals sitting on the riverbank shaking their heads at the recreationists, so intent on their journey they barely notice the land around them (personal communication, Michael Heine, April, 1994).

Most of the sense of place literature has to deal with long term residence in an area as if only nativity can give one the cognitive knowledge of watershed drainages, seasons, flora and fauna that the bioregionalists and geographers seem to assume underlies this construct of sense-of-place. Far more research needs to be done to investigate the inner workings by which persons construct their connectiveness to a place. According to Hay (1988, p. 159), studies abound regarding people's *functional* bonds to places, whereas "people's *emotive* bonds to place, within their whole *lifeworlds*, have seldom been studied (emphasis in original)." Hay describes this lifeworld as being a collective, holistic, intuitive whole, "too individualistic and personal to be researched using the generalizing, impersonal methods of reductive science" (p. 160).

The inner lifeworld is difficult to investigate. It takes a certain amount of self-reflectivity in an individual to be able to express what is often taken-for-granted. This may be one of the reasons for the minimal amount of research into the effective sense of place held by individuals. What little has been done has relied heavily, as Hay (1988) and Raffan (1992) both criticize, on literary analysis and other non-field methodologies. Porteous and Evernden are examples. These methods seem far removed from the wisdom-on-the-land implied by the term 'sense of place.'

I have been a transient on this continent, living and working in outdoor programs in over a half-dozen locales. I had a strong affinity for a place in Southern Utah where I spent only three winters. Perhaps the relative strength of this relation would have been more intense if more time had been spent there but my sense of that place still seemed to be more powerful (or at least different) than many residents with whom I talked. Upon reflection of other places and experiences, I would say that I have a "perceptual connection" with the planet/nature that gets reflected into the places I live (Abrams, 1985). A similarity exists in the words of bioregionalist Doug Aberley (1993, p. 53).

> My need *now* is for my own "sense of place" which depends not simply on discovering my own neighbourhood, community or local region, but upon seeing the relationship of my own local places to every other place on the planet. I need a sense of my whole planet, of my continent, and the major sub-parts of my continent in order to see how my local places are parts of these wider regions of natural life and human living.

This wider connection exemplified by Aberley may be the route by which outdoor education needs to go. Outdoor programs that take people from their home environs into a wilderness setting may need to concentrate on broader constructs of nature than locale-specific ones in order to help participants transfer any attachment which begins to form during the program. However, it may be that Aberley's local sense of place was sufficiently established to enable this more global construction.

Sense of Time

By implying that a sense of place comes from long association with a locale the concept hints at notions of time. The journey motif that, according to Porteous (1990), dominates western culture can be seen in terms of passing *through* space, yet it is travelling *with* time. Time and space are thus opposed in western thought. Time flows while matter remains inert and space immutable. Within western thought a duality exists between History

(a function of time) and Nature, reflecting this cultural duality between time/space (Carr, 1986). The physical world tends to be only a backdrop upon which the important stuff of human story occurs. One consequence is the notion that we can only know purpose through recorded history. In western religion, for example, this surfaces as the rejection of any sort of natural theology to augment the reports of Bible, Torah or Koran (Roszak, 1992). If time is constructed linearly and opposed to and privileged over space, then space (and it's various manifestations such as Nature, land, earth, place) can contribute little to a sense of meaning or one's 'place in the world.'

Time has been at the core of definitions of leisure and recreation. Even now, common denotation holds leisure to be "free or unoccupied *time*" (New World Dictionary). Walzer (1983) spends a great deal of time (er, words) describing the free, idle, unharriedness of leisure in contrast to work. He connects both leisure and vacations to the intentional expression of and undiluted need for freedom. In a significant way, it is 'time off.' But also, "the escape [vacation] represents is generally from one set of routines to another" (Walzer, 1983, p.188). Vacations, like the weekend, are a special case in a person's existence. Simply the change in routine is significant. On the other hand, forced leisure or 'time off' may become a burden; an example is unemployment.

Roberts and Chambers (1985) describe the social construction of leisure time in an article aptly titled "Changing Time." Simply put, time has changed to match the needs of industrialisation. Time--rhythmically-paced with frequent holidays to match the needs of agriculture in pre-industrial Europe--was commodified to accommodate industry's need for steady production of material goods. "It is not mere coincidence that a diffusion of clocks and watches occurred at the exact historical moment when industrialisation demanded a synchronisation of labour to machines. The clock provides a means of dissociating time from events in an abstract and homogeneous sequence that can be measure precisely and independently of nature" (Roberts and Chambers, 1985, p.23).

Roberts and Chalmers seem to be suggesting that we experience things in ways often organized within the sequence of clock time. Lunch at noon whether hungry or not is an example. Even in a wilderness setting this kind of structuring routine still occurs. Participants routinely balk at getting up 'too early' although arising with the daylight has many benefits when one is not near electric lighting. On one nineteen-day trip we turned ahead our watches two hours. Knowing the watch said seven o'clock when they awoke, rather than the 'real' time of 5:00 a.m., made a world of difference in our mindsets.

There is also an experiential component to the sense of time. Phenomenology makes us aware that we experience time depending on the events of our experience. At issue is how participants handle their experience. Experience unfolds within a sequence of time, from one moment to the next. Personal time varies. It passes at different experiential rates--like the interminable moments in the doctor's waiting room or the whirlwind pace often expressed as "where did the day go to?" Time has tempo--rhythmic patterning--and each place has its own time, Van den Berg (1970, p. 121) writes unwittingly betraying an objectification of time by locating it in the place rather than in the experiencing of the person. In the wilderness setting the experience of tempo may be far different from urban or other human dominated areas. How the wilderness program organizes events will undoubtedly alter the experience.

In reflecting back on their personal histories, human beings reconstruct their memory in ways that do more to reflect current priorities than then-contemporary experience (Johnson and Sherman, 1990). We remember events differently. An experience may not have been meaningful at another particular point in time but later becomes important, or vice versa. In Schutz's (1973) view of social science action takes centre stage. This looking back, or retrospective interpretation, is a means of ascribing meaning by the individual (actor) to the experience. Explained after the action, "because" motives will vary from the "in order to" motives held prior to the experience. The actor may or may not be consciously aware of motive for an action. The experience and reflection on experience exist in a circularity of meaning, influencing further meaning and action.

One advantage of wilderness trips is the opportunity to experience a different time frame. Natural settings do not operate on clock time. The daylight hours are much better for most activities. Even with the artificial light of a flashlight, candle or fire, many a group has experienced the frustration of camp preparation or cooking in the dark. Some instructors call these 'natural' rhythms, which says something about their constructions about both Time and Nature. What about my personal body clock that even after weeks in the bush still wakes me up hours after daylight has brightened the world?

Van den Berg notices that we "often used words borrowed from a spatial order" (p. 109)[4]. How far is Calgary? "About three hours." This returns us to the discussion of sense

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[4]In one of my favourite author's novels, time is conceptualized as a four-lane superhighway with a variety of exits into alternate times (Zelazny, 1979). In a battered VW Bug Hitler is still looking for a reality in which he won. At the same time, the protagonist is seeking to understand his past as he searches for a different future place he thinks he remembers. He lives from old age to youth as he travels the road. Space and time are inseparable.

of place. Raffan (1992) and others have noted that recreationists hurrying through a place do not have the time to notice it. Or perhaps they do not have time to know it. Most of the literature relies on longtime residents, yet quantity of presence is only one element in developing a sense of place. Any individual develops a sense of each place. At issue is the quality and type of this sense. This has major implications for those of us who take people into wilderness settings for short periods of time. One observer wondered if my self-described facility in getting the feel of the natural world even in a short weekend trip may be because long experience has shown me what I am looking for, sensitizes me, and makes it easier to shift quickly from 'civilization' to this other reality. I don't think this is a gift unique to me. Those who are transient but self-reflectively aware may gain a sense of place in a different fashion than long time residents. I suggest many residents have an apparently weaker affinity for their place, or a qualitatively different sense of place, than some visitors. More research needs to be done to investigate the relationship of time spent in a place with that elusive sense of the place.

An issue is how instructors organize participants' experiences and what impact that has on both group and individuals. Many wilderness programs, like Outward Bound, transmit a form of clock time to the wilderness setting through frequent reference to when the group should get up in the mornings, get out of camp, have lunch and so on. It seems intuitively likely that participants will experience nature differently depending on the construction of time adopted. When people are asked to live simultaneously in multiple worlds the more familiar reality may take precedence (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Imposition of time from another reality may have important ramifications to the experience of the natural world.

In addition, leaving time for the possibility of discovery instead of hurrying through the landscape is another issue. Wilderness trips may simply be time off from the everyday reality. But even within that idea--recreation as re-creation--there exists the possibility of learning. These issues are pedagogical ones. It is appropriate to now turn attention to that subject.

Pedagogy in Outdoor Education

There are a number of terms often used with considerable overlap. Among these terms are outdoor education, outdoor pursuits, adventure education, challenge education, risk recreation, wilderness-based programming and experiential education. The connotations vary and certain terms have gained or lost popularity over the years. A review of research and theory in experiential, environmental and adventure education follows.

As a practitioner with a decade of experience teaching in the field I found much of the published research disappointing and of limited usefulness. For me, the problem boiled down to fundamental assumptions about the nature of human beings and the way we learn and know. Most of the research was founded on a different epistemology than that from which I instruct.

In the effort to set up experimental and quasi-experimental designs with sufficient controls on potentially confounding variables to generate statistically significant and predictive results much of the research loses its practicality for the field instructor (Robbottom and Hart, 1995). Such research bounds a holistic experience into concrete dimensions in isolation despite the fact that they are not fragmented in everyday life. Furthermore, knowledge of averages and standard deviations tells me little about how the individual is experiencing the program and forming their base of knowledge with which to make present and later decisions. Studies that view programs like medical 'treatment' ignore the learner's role and makes her or him a passive recipient of program delivery.

Knapp (1992) insists that ultimately learners are responsible for their own learning and that the role of a teacher is to facilitate the process. Following Dewey, Knapp mentions two foundational beliefs of experiential education: "1) that learning is not limited to the classroom and, 2) that helping students make meaning is what learning is all about" (p. 49). The shaping of knowledge is a process of construction. Experiential education is basically the assumption that people learn from experience. While this may seem self-evident, the how of actively teaching so that learning comes from learner experience is a more difficult manoeuvre. It helps to have an understanding of theory in which to ground practice.

At least three movements are present within curriculum development (Stevenson, 1993). These include a behavioral approach, focused on the technical aspects of teaching and information delivery, a constructivist approach that aims to understand the learner's meaningful engagement with the material, and a critical social science approach that seeks societal transformation and anti-hegemonic social analysis. These will be briefly addressed in following pages and again in Chapter Seven. The first model, behaviourism, has dominated curriculum development and research (Robbottom and Hart, 1995). The second stance is the approach taken by this thesis. The third holds much in common with alternative critiques of nature proposed by many ecophilosophers. These alternatives criticize the western and scientific worldviews discussed above.

Constructivist Curricula

Robertson (1994) criticizes the overemphasis of attitude surveys in environmental education as deterministic, assuming that a 'treatment' will effect change, ignoring the learner's prior knowledge, experiences and cognitive processing of the content. Robertson contends that participants work to make meaning out of their experience, adapting and altering the educative event to fit past constructions of their worldview and that this process should be important in educational research. "Consider that although any view of education will point to something that changes as a consequence of an educative event, behaviourist and classical views take the *product* as evidence of the *process*" (Robertson, 1994 p. 22).

Von Glaserfeld (1991, 1995) also criticizes behaviourist teaching saying that it disregards thinking and focuses on training. Citing Kant he says reinforcement only makes people want more reinforcement. The leading proponent of the stance known as "radical constructivism" Von Glaserfeld suggests knowledge is not a precise representation of the world. Instead, knowledge is a construction erected by the individual to "fit" with his or her experience of the world.

Von Glaserfeld (1991) attributes to the movement's roots in Scepticism: There is no certain knowledge of the real world. Radical constructivists gave up "the notion that knowledge ought to be a veridical 'representation' of a world as it 'exists' prior to being experienced (that is, ontological reality)" (Von Glaserfeld, 1991, p. 16). Constructivism is the study of how members know the world. In Von Glaserfeld's (1991, p. 17) perspective, "I have never said there is no ontic world, only that I can't *know* it. (emphasis in original)" There may be an independent reality out there but we only know the way we see and feel and understand and perceive. In my mind, this makes the constructivist view palatable. For an individual (or a society), the construction proves its worth by how well it fits experience. For Von Glaserfeld (1991, p. 20), constructivism must go beyond the "mere proclamation that the world we experience is a world we construct" and show how it is useful or works in managing our lives. On the other hand, interpretation of experience is influenced by social constructions and personal interpretation. Therefore, the knowledge developed from their experience by individuals will always be directed in certain ways and should not be taken as 'the way things always are.'

The constructivist position, (Millar, 1989, p. 589) summarizes, holds "that the process of eliciting, clarification and construction of new ideas takes place *internally*, within the learner's own head." Pedagogically speaking, then, students learn not because teachers teach (the "open head, insert knowledge" assumption) but because they have taken prior

knowledge and reworked it in light of new information and experience. These are the twin processes of *assimilation* and *accommodation* as described by Piaget. The first is new experience incorporated into prior knowledge, the latter refers to new experience that fundamentally alters prior knowledge (Robertson, 1994). Piagetian theory asserts that direct experience gives meaning and form to the process of learning (Lisowski and Disinger, 1991). Construction of knowledge is not a process abstracted from prior experience of the individual.

Another influence on constructivist teaching and experiential learning is the cognitive learning theory of Ausubel which emphasizes meaningful learning over learning by rote. Robertson (1994, p.25) summarizes, "To learn meaningfully, individuals [must choose to] relate new knowledge to relevant concepts and propositions that they already know." This proposition assumes that the learner's own knowledge and prior experience is the most important ingredient in new knowledge construction and must be respected. The student, again, takes ultimate responsibility for his or her own learning. The teacher's role, again, is as facilitator, to assist engagement with prior experience in order to assimilate or accommodate. On the other hand, this also assumes that the learner is self-consciously aware of their knowledge already held.

As we have already seen, construction of knowledge is also situated within a historical and cultural context--the social world in which the individual participates. The process of construction is a combination of the influence of social structures and individual role. "Living in a similar culture, we come to share constructs with others of our group, although the implications of these constructs may not be identical" (Bannister & Fransella, 1980, p. 105-6). These constructions are often unexamined by the individual, what Berger and Luckmann (1966) call "taken-for-granted knowledge" and Spradley (1980) refers to as tacit rather than explicit culture. Schutz (1973) notes that such knowledge is often "incoherent, only partially clear and not at all free from contradiction" (p. 45). Awareness of this condition indicates the difficulty that will occur in attempting to investigate these constructs. Still, both students and teachers should probe the understandings of a phenomenon, says Robertson (1994, p. 27), "teachers so that they might better relate to each student's understandings, and students, that they might take a more active role in engaging their own understandings."

Constructivism, as a theory of learning or knowing seems to have considerable practicality. Understanding how people develop their specific conceptualizations would logically have important ramifications to educators. Some educators suggest that only by

developing theories on how learners build their world pictures can effective teaching occur as the educator responds to the details of conceptualizing (Robertson, 1994; Von Glaserfeld, 1991). This is unquestionably difficult. "Such models of another's mental operations necessarily remain hypothetical. There are no 'hard' observable facts about another thinker's concepts and mental operations" (Von Glaserfeld, 1991, p. 23). Since the processes are internal, it is at this point that teaching moves out of the purview of the technician and becomes an art form; the educator strives to deal with the uncertainty of another's mental workings and help the learner develop conceptions that fit with experiential reality.

Experiential Education

Knapp (1995) firmly situates experiential education within the progressive movement that flourished in education through the first half of the century. The roots of experiential education run far earlier than that however. The progressive education movement's most vocal spokesperson was John Dewey, whose 1938 book Experience and Education is still a classic. Dewey advocated the learner's centrality in educational effort--that learners are motivated to learn and learn more and better when their experience and individuality are recognized as valid educational events (Knapp, 1992, 1995). This is still the core of experiential education.

Another oft-quoted aphorism is Carol Joplin's (1981) comment that "experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, it is the reflection process that turns experience into experiential education" (p. 17). Von Glaserfeld refers to Kant as saying "Reflection is the operation of the mind on it's own activity. In a way this is thinking about thinking. Fundamentally, it is helping people learn how to learn. How does one create a wish in someone to critically reflect and construct knowledge? Proudman (1992, p. 19) answers, by activity that "emotionally engages the individual." Another practitioner, Tim Hansel of Summit Adventures, depicted "non-neutral learning" as "an active learning environment where everyone is forced to participate and therefore forced to learn" (Rydberg, 1985, p. 11). It should be noted here that it is the active learning environment that does the 'forcing,' not the instructor. Effective teachers will manipulate the learning environment to influence both the individual and the group in the construction process. The manipulation does not deny agency to the actors. Since learning is not just process but also involves content the teacher uses language and circumstances carefully to constrain certain directions that a learner may go, thereby curtailing certain potential constructions (Von Glaserfeld, 1995).

So what is this thing called experiential education, and how does a teacher use experience to promote educational outcomes? An immediate note of caution comes to mind. Experiential education is not a series of activities *done to* a learner. Nor should simulations and games supplant experience of 'the real thing.' Learning is a process. The teacher is facilitator and must recognize they do not have ultimate control over the outcome. The learner is ultimately responsible for their knowledge construction. In yielding the illusion of control teachers are actually better able to help learners a) understand the best present theories in a subject given the rapid propagation of knowledge, and b) develop the flexibility of higher order thinking and knowledge construction (Von Glaserfeld, 1995).

Knapp (1992, p. 36-38) provides an excellent summary of several models. All the models share a fundamental form that takes after the "What?⇨So What?⇨Now What?" cycle articulated by Kolb (1976). The first stage is the *experience* itself. This experience is reflected upon. In the *reflection* stage, according to Joplin (1981), potential learning is recognized, processed into meaningful form, and evaluated. Often group discussion or journalling is used under the assumption that something expressed is often solidified in one's mind (Knapp, 1992; Jones and Pfeiffer, 1979; Joplin, 1981). It is the power of language to typify what would otherwise be subjective or unconsolidated.

The next stage is the *generalization* of the learning from this situation into other situations in life. Knapp notes that such transfer in unlikely unless learners are aware that this context can be seen as similar with others. Finally, *application* is made to those other situations which then promotes a new cycle of learning from the new experience. Application is active experimentation with the newly formed knowledge.

A final note: since constructions vary among individuals even these theories of experiential education are only of value as long as they are useful. In true experiential fashion North Carolina Outward Bound School Director John Huie reminds us of an essential baseline, "Of all the things that might be true about experiential education, the one thing that is unassailably true is that you can't find out by defining it" (Quoted in Proudman, 1992).

> Experiential education is transformational... While society tempts many educators to market a cookbook approach, I believe that experiential educators, like all good educators, are artists using a palette of tools and abilities that are ever expanding and changing... May our journeys continue to be enriched (Proudman, 1992, p. 23).

Education for Social Change

A criticism of constructivism is it's apparent relativism. The argument typically runs thus: constructivism, rebelling against the notion that 'the way things are' is objectively observable without bias on the observer's part has emphasized the multiplicity of realities. This becomes "accept *any* perspective." If all knowledge is a construction, uncertainty reigns. Ravn (1991), citing the sixteenth century philosopher-mathematician Leibnitz, describes reality as a unity of perspectives. Tolerance becomes the only good. Whose perspective is right? Everyone's? Only mine?

Consider the practical example of an environmental issues. One side of the issue argues that global warming is occurring and swift response to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is necessary in order to avert polar icecap melt, extensive coastal flooding and dramatic societal change. Another perspective holds that global warming is by no means a proven scientific certainty and such dramatic action would have foolish consequences. In a relativist argument, both are acceptable. Even more disconcerting examples could also be provided--consider female circumcision/mutilation, or even the moral outrage of Auschwitz. The consequences of such relativism are frightening.

The issue of a elemental reality or singular 'truth' upon which to base moral decisions becomes irrelevant within the constructivist assumption that we can only know our own experience. As has been argued earlier, the experience of nature is socially and personally constructed as knowledge used by the individual to function in everyday life. This is not, however, to say that all constructions are equally valuable or beneficial.

Ravn (1991) notes that constructivism can be liberating in that reality can be changed if it is not fixed. "The point that social institutions are the constructions of a community of human agents implies that those same human beings possess the power to radically change those institutions" (p. 97). But Ravn also criticizes constructivist writing as relativist--there is no attempt to draw a line in the spectrum of acceptable constructions. From Ravn's stance, diversity is one side of the coin; selecting an alternative is the essential flip side. Von Glaserfeld (1991) believes that individual conceptual schemes will be reinforced or eliminated through social interaction--does the knowledge 'fit' experiential reality, including that of the social group? This is similar to the Piagetian notion of adaptation wherein constructions evolve in their environment and the ones that persist are those naturally selected by their fitness. Groups do establish acceptable constructions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). For example, graffiti is not a suitable recreation activity for most social groups. But this evolution of the social stock of knowledge seem to ignore the intentional moral agency of human

beings although Von Glaserfeld does modify his position somewhat. For him, ethics are the option to change our constructions when we don't like what we have created. Other constructivists have advocated the need to take responsibility for one's constructions (Ravn, 1991).

Ravn's solution is to tolerate ideas and roles in proportion to their closeness to an optimal condition. Ravn suggests the optimal condition is when "people feel part of the larger whole *as well as* encouraged to accept others pursuing their own paths in experiencing this larger wholeness" (p. 103). The "good life" is "unity-in-diversity." Thus, more desirable than relativism and still avoiding intolerance, is the constructing of a common direction for individual and community to find fulfilment through, rather than singular reality. One does not live by liberation alone, Ravn concludes. However, these attempts to establish the appropriateness of constructions are founded in the human community.

Especially problematic for environmental activists, such attempts may ignore the needs of other parts of the broader community of life on the planet. Perhaps new trends extending rights or ethics beyond the human community will be more 'fit' than the present destructive course of action (Armstrong & Botzler, 1993). Environmental education has a long road still in helping people change society's fundamentally anti-ecological orientation to the rest of the earth.

> Environmental education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve these problems and motivated to work toward their solution (Stapp, 1969, p. 30)

Those words, written over a quarter century ago, still reflect the understanding most practitioners have about environmental education. Whether environmental education has been successful at achieving a measure of those aspirations remains to be seen. The past quarter century has witnessed the continuing degradation of the earth.

Critical Curricula

Neither teaching, curricula or individual learning occurs in "social, political or historical vacuum" (Robertson, 1994, p. 29). The third approach to curriculum is critical. Although accepting the notion that knowledge is socially constructed, this approach seeks to analyze the context in which the construction is formed (Stevenson, 1993). Recognizing the dominant social paradigm and choosing to adopt a new relational stance towards nature, the environment and the human place within such a stance is fully within the realm of critical

social theory. Environmental problems are social and political more than merely biological and chemical and necessitate a social critique.

However, neither this critique nor new ways of relating to the earth are reinforced by society. Because society is structured in a certain way that is oppressive, when an individual understands the oppression he or she either has to leave the society or deal with it (Fay, 1986). That usually necessitates compromise of some sort. Those who come to an eco-centric worldview, who don't opt out of this society, must make compromises that are less ecologically sensitive and more socially constrained than their eco-centric worldview supports (Duenkel, 1994). Any environmental curricula that does not begin to analyze the structural violence towards the earth in human society or the interconnection of environmental issues with other justice concerns is limited (Granberg-Michaelson, 1984; Hicks, 1988; Robbottom and Hart, 1995; Wilson, 1991). In this way education serves to liberate people from social constraints that hinder them in living fully and more satisfyingly (Fay, 1986).

Environmental Education Research

For Robertson (1994) the conceptualizing action of the individual is the important research topic in environmental education. If the goal of environmental education is to effect social change and promote the development of a personal environmental ethic or pro-environmental lifestyles, then better understanding of the processes of critical thinking, reflection and conceptualization are vital. The meanings individuals attach to a construct or experience may indicate values and, potentially, motivation for action.

Peled (1989) concurs,

> Our experience of places and our intentions and actions toward them are determined by the way we construe them, by the way we perceive the entities that populate them: people, objects, hills, fields, space, etc.... Thus, one's readiness to preserve the existing ecology of a wooded hill will be shaped by whether he or she construes it as a holiday resort, a reserve, picturesque landscape or as "raw material" (p. 19).

Peled's comment points out the circularity of experience leading to knowledge which leads to new experience and new knowledge in hand. This circularity is at the core of the experiential learning calces noted above.

Gigliotti (1990) notes that although support for the environment remains high, individuals do not seem to apply this concern to their lifestyles. He explains that the conception among the college students surveyed seems to be that human impact is bad for the environment, but 'my' lifestyle is not a problem. Individuals have constructed a belief

system to support their existent values. How to change such conceptions becomes the question. The learner must first be aware of and dissatisfied with the existing conception and find the new one intelligible and contextually relevant (Gunstone, et al., 1988; Posner and Gertzog, 1982).

Several researchers have criticized the attempt to quantify individual's attitudes towards the natural world as reductionist, suggesting that such indexing shows little (Hay, 1988; Robertson, 1994; Wyman et al., 1988). Copious amounts of research has focused on the attitudes and concerns individuals possess regarding the environment, yet have shown that behaviour does not follow (Gigliotti, 1993; Hanna, 1995; Hausbeck, Milbraith, & Enright, 1992; Hines, Hungerford, & Tomera, 1986; Newhouse, 1990; van der Smisson, 1975). There appear to be a large number of intervening factors that confound the deterministic implications of this attitude-behaviour linkage. Although later models have become quite complicated (Hungerford & Volk, 1990) much of the research around attitudes in environmental education remains excessively simplistic. The weight of these outcome-based studies show little confidence that environmental concern or awareness becomes action. In one activist's words, "the gap between concerned rhetoric and action is widening" (Macintosh, 1991).

The gap between measured attitudes and documented behaviours may be a result of poor measuring technique as Newhouse (1990) counselled in an overview of such research, or represent fundamental problems with attempting to reduce the complexity of human lifeworlds to disconnected component parts as described above (Hay, 1988). Little evidence exists to connect the measured variables to the whole (Hunter, 1987). While Newhouse (1990) complains that there is "little information about how environmental attitudes are formed" (p.31), several critics have suggested focusing on how individuals make meaning of their experiences. Thus the interpretive approach to both curricula and research.

Significant Life Experiences

> Probably, however, the most powerful experiences in our lives are not those designed to "educate" us but rather life experiences. One of the most understudied questions is what... life experiences have triggered [conservationists] devotion to the cause? (Newhouse, 1990, p. 31).

It is conceivable that a wilderness trip might be a relatively significant life experience. Several researchers have found that exposure to the natural world plays an important role

in helping individuals form a concern for the environment. However, the role of significant life experiences has been little studied since Tanner (1980) first highlighted it. In Tanner's survey of environmental activists, respondents indicated positive outdoor experiences were their most significant influence. A decade later Palmer (1992) found the same self-reported influence in a survey of 238 British environmental educators. Palmer noted that negative encounters, such as the degradation of a place of personal significance, were a larger influence than Tanner had observed. Peters-Grant (1987) came to the same conclusions in a study of volunteer environmental workers in Britain. All three surveys also reported that concern for the environment grew gradually for most of the individuals surveyed, rather than suddenly or as a result of a particular incident. Even so, Palmer reported that 29% of the respondents recalled a single influential experience.

In his attempt to describe the sub-cultural character of environmental activists in Alberta, Cuthbertson (1992) recounted the frequent reference to personal experiences for these individuals. These experiences took two major forms. The first form was incidents in which the individual felt personally affected and therefore motivated towards activism. The second form is experiences, usually early and ongoing encounters with the natural world, that helped develop a sense of connectedness to Nature in general. It is important to note, however, that experience in natural environments is merely a contributor in developing an ecologically sensitive perspective. An element of concern or care for the environment was evident in Cuthbertson's activists. It is unclear what this common theme may have to the affective bonding of 'sense of place.' Ambiguity exists since the latter concept is usually tied in the literature to specific locale rather than an abstract concept which Nature would seem to be.

A group at York University in Metropolitan Toronto utilized narrative to write their environmental biographies (Wyman et al., 1988). Several themes regarding the natural world emerged. Of particular attention was the range of environments that each person had experienced, and the fact that it was not wilderness or even wild natural settings that were particularly influential. Contact with nature in the many forms in which it was present and perceived within urban and suburban environments were vital for these individuals. Again, frequent and ongoing experiences were important.

In addition, the group noted that the insights derived from their reflections were powerful reinforcements contributing to further growth and development of environmental values. As one person wrote, "By writing this autobiography, I have become a whole person... I have come to realize that there was a deep-rooted environmentalist within me that

simply blossomed... " (p. 571). This is in accord with experiential learning theory that emphasizes that experience becomes educative only after it is considered and reflected upon.

These 'significant life experiences' in the outdoors have been an important influence in individuals with an ecologically sensitive orientation. Of particular note to educators is the low significance in the above studies attached to school experiences as an important formulator of concern for the environment. However, it may be that most of these individuals were beyond schooling age when environmental education began to make entries into school settings. Certainly the potential exists for a wilderness trip to be a significant experience or continue a process already begun. Since this study revolves around a wilderness program the rest of this chapter will focus there.

Adventure Education

Adventure education differs from outdoor recreation and even outdoor adventure pursuits. Adventure education is the intentional use of challenge or adventure components to serve an educational purpose. The field falls solidly within the domain of experiential education. In practice adventure programs exist on a continuum blending recreation and personal development. Since adventure education is not limited to outdoor settings, I will tend to use the term wilderness programming also.

The profusion of adventure programming suggests that there is a perceived benefit to this type of programming. Challenge activities have been used for a wide diversity of goals and populations. Ewert (1989a, p. 49) lists a number of benefits of outdoor adventure pursuits which would also accrue to adventure education. Included in his list are self-concept, well-being, confidence, compassion, group cooperation, respect for others, communication, feedback on behaviour, nature awareness, fitness, problem-solving, outdoor techniques and recreational skills, strength, value clarification and improved academics.

Most instructors and theoretical models in the field assume the small group of the program (typically six to twelve persons form an integrated group) becomes its own little society as new norms are constructed to deal with living in this new reality (Bacon, 1983; Hunter, 1987; Potter, 1993; Walsh and Golins, 1976). To this mix, program elements are added that challenge the learner and "compel into experience" both the individual and group[5]. Reflective exercises are typically used to turn the experience into an educative encounter.

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[5]This quote is attributed to Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound (PCOBS, 1990).

These program elements are the 'curriculum' of adventure and wilderness programs, although only occasionally called by that term.

Ewert (1989a) summarizes the research in outdoor adventure programming from early studies in the 1950s into the present. The bulk of the research has focused on youth-at-risk populations, therapeutic dimensions, social benefits and self-esteem/locus of control issues. The field has had a strong focus on attitude surveys and short-term measurement of the above constructs (Ewert, 1989a). Studies have varied. For example, adventure programs seem to provide a demonstrated increase--at least in the short term--in that illusive construct self-concept (Ewert, 1989a; Gillet, et al., 1991), a decrease in the recidivism of youth involved with the legal system, increased socialization and better relations with peers and teachers (Kelly and Baer, 1968), and positive therapeutic effects with disabled individuals or psychologically wounded (Maguire and Priest, 1994).

Most of the research has been of the pretest/posttest variety measuring short term changes. The little that investigates longer term effects are considerably more mixed in demonstrating the staying power of various potential benefits (Ewert, 1989a). In addition, these designs, focused on the group as a statistical unit without investigation of individual variability or programmatic elements, inform practitioners only marginally, although the studies are very useful as justification for maintenance of funding. The same complaints mentioned above for research into environmental attitudes apply here: such research attempts an isolation of individual components of the human person that do not exist on their own (Bannister and Fransella, 1980). Contrary to reductionist science, the study of the parts does not necessarily lead to the understanding of the whole. Even Ewert (1989a) notes the overreliance on paper and pencil measures of attitudes and recommends research move beyond description into explanation. "Given the substantial amount of research already done... there can be little doubt that participation... may provide a variety of benefits for the individual and group... Documenting these outcomes often does little in explaining how and why they have occurred" (p. 111).[6]

Riggins (1986) attempts to begin an explanation of the effectiveness of adventure education by applying mainstream education research. This research has highlighted several

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[6]Ewert recommends Glancy's (1986) simple participation-observation as "an interesting procedure" (p. 111) immediately after a table listing eighteen research methods/approaches. Only two methods among all the statistically oriented approaches are in the realm of interpretive or qualitative methods. Ewert's is at least the third endorsement of Glancy's study I have encountered recently from researchers not generally in the interpretive camp. Yet such methodological approaches are sparse in the recreation literature.

factors typical of adventure programs that have been shown to lead to pedagogical effectiveness in traditional, indoor classrooms also. In particular, Riggins mentions small group size, cooperative strategies, supportive group climate, high expectations and task success. Riggins notes that these factors emphasize the students' taking responsibility for their own learning, a fundamental tenet of experiential and constructivist theories in education (Knapp, 1992). Riggins completely ignores the challenge/stress experience, natural environment and reflection aspects in his analysis. But it is these latter aspects that make adventure education unique from other educational approaches (Priest, 1986). Riggins does suggest that the integration of factors is important and "As participants and leaders have alluded, that the sum effect of the adventure-based experience is far greater than the accumulative impact of its individual components" (Riggins, p. 4). Therefore it is essential to investigate the context of the learning--in this case, the wilderness 'classroom.' (Goodson and Mangan, 1991).

Surprisingly, for a field that often runs programs in wilderness and other natural settings, Ewert scarcely mentions environmental components among the research. Moreover, searches in the CD-rom indexes, Dissertations Abstracts, and related journals in education, environmental studies and outdoor recreation show little research into the role of adventure recreation pursuits and programming in the formation of participant relationships with the natural world or concern for the environment.

Wilderness Programming

Wilderness trips and the written descriptions of encounters with wild nature have a long history on this continent. Exploration and scientific inquiry were given as utilitarian justification for pursuing wilderness enterprises--the motive of adventure only gained acceptance in the nineteenth century with the advent of Romanticism (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1990). Early explorers kept journals that were published in the settled regions. Many a person thrilled to the meticulous words of Lewis and Clark, Samuel Hearne and others (Whisenhunt, 1973, Newman, 1985). Writing oriented towards the experience of the natural world also became popular. Thoreau, Grey Owl, Muir, Dillard and Rowe are a few voices in that long literary tradition. These writers described a sense of place or connection with the land or natural world. Muir also led trips to the Sierra Nevada of California with the express purpose of showing people the beauties of these locales and arguing for their preservation (Whisenhunt, 1973). As the settled regions expanded and grew more urbanized summer camps and organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides became an important source

of connection with the natural world and a much neglected forerunner of what we now consider outdoor education (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1990; Thomas, 1994).

Certainly the development of an environmental ethic has an important role in solving the global and local environmental problem. In an increasingly urbanized world, one would reasonably expect that encounter with the natural world becomes important in that development and that wilderness tripping may be a worthy place for participants to consider their relations with the planet.

Two criticisms of adventure programming in relation to developing environmental concern should be noted here. First, most adventure education has been claimed to promote an adversarial relationship with the natural world (LaChapelle, 1991). One of the founders of Outward Bound in the United States once wrote "We educate *in* the mountains, not *for* them (emphasis added)" (Miner, 1964). Secondly, there are serious questions whether any awareness developed through a wilderness trip in another environment will transfer to the participant's home setting (Raffan, 1990).

Both criticisms are important to recognize. The first is surmountable. LaChapelle (1991) describes her program's emphasis on working *with* the natural environment, discovering concordance and growth through harmony rather than a 'conquer the mountain' mentality. In Horwood's (1991) scheme to educate for a "deep ecological" connection a fundamental tenet is the development of a sense of the wilderness place in which participants travel. However, in many adventure programs the outdoors environment is viewed as an opponent by participants, if not leaders. While employed at one program that worked primarily with troubled and incarcerated youth, a senior leader told me, "you take them out and hike the *hell* outta 'em." This philosophy is certainly not likely to encourage a positive environmental concern in participants.

The second criticism of adventure education is more difficult to address. Most of the sense-of-place literature focuses on the people who live in a particular locale (Hay, 1988). Locals tend to believe that recreationists are only passing through, and that new residents or transients can't know a place as longtime inhabitants (Raffan, 1992). Only extrapolation from studies such as Tanner's (1980) might validate the intuitive notion that people who have a positive experience in one natural environment might begin to develop an emotive bond with nature as a whole, and therefore with their home environment. Another possibility is that the break in routine of being away helps one notice the distinctiveness of the homeplace (Hay, 1988).

There is a paucity of published research on how individuals interpret experience in the natural world or on wilderness trips. This is especially surprising given the wide variety of such writing in the popular press. What does exist often is found in dissertations and theses.

Segal (1988) and Walsh (1989) utilized phenomenological interviewing techniques to investigate the "communing with nature" experience. Segal investigated three men and three women who spent extended periods of time in a wilderness setting. Over the passage of time these participants moved from heightened sensory awareness through heightened self awareness and emotional catharsis and into heightened spiritual awareness. Segal noted that the men discussed their experience in terms of action while the women used terms of being. Walsh focused solely on women's experience. The eight co-researchers were regular participants in wilderness activity. Interestingly, along with wilderness and selfhood, the themes of both connectedness and separateness emerged. Walsh noted several polarities among the individual's experience: independence versus dependence, separateness versus connectedness, vulnerability versus capability, and life versus. death. Both Segal and Walsh reported a growth in a sense of oneness with something larger than the self. Both studies also emphasized the therapeutic character of the experience of the natural world.

Stringer used a variety of methods, including participant-observation and post trip interviews, to investigate the nature of spiritual experiences during two multi-day wilderness programs (Stringer and McAvoy, 1992). The participants reported a wide variety of characteristics and incidents that could be considered spiritual. These experiences were heightened by the emotional intensity of incidents reported as either highs or lows. Stringer concluded that the novelty of the experience and lack of pressures compared to home had much to do with reports of wilderness spiritual experiences. I find surprising her conclusion that such experiences in other environments, i.e. the city, would be likely if only time and other constraints were removed. The participants had an affinity for the natural environment; Stringer's recommendations revolve around leaders programming discussion and reflective exercises specifically with this affinity and its enhancement in mind.

Morrison (1986) and Richley (1992) both investigated the experience of wilderness solitude. Solitude experiences, also called "solo," are a frequent planned element in wilderness programs. Using slightly different approaches in their phenomenological analysis, both studies recognized similar themes. Participants spending time in the natural world experienced an appreciation of the natural world, atunement of the senses, knowledge of self

and sense of synchronisation with the rhythms of time and place. In particular Morrison related that several of the co-researchers became aware of taken-for-granted notions. Until the venture into the simplicity of the solo and encounter with the natural world during the experience they had not noticed the city or the busyness of their lives. With this in mind it would be quite illuminative to delve into the experience of solo within a built environment such as the city.

From the studies above one can assume that wilderness experience has an effect of providing an enhanced awareness of the relationships between self, others and the natural world. However, these studies all focused on personally chosen, individual experience. Even fewer research considers the experience of the natural world during an adventure program or in a group.

Potter's (1993) phenomenological investigation of short weekend trips was also one of few studies that had a longitudinal component. He surveyed university students on a canoe trip then focused on several co-researchers. Although each co-researcher described an initial connection with the natural world during and immediately following the weekend trip, this feeling quickly dissipated. Potter felt more time spent in the outdoor setting may be a critical element in sustainability. The lack of societal support for maintenance of this feeling of closeness was also a factor.

Duenkel's (1994) work considered wilderness trip leaders and how they attempted to help trip participants move toward an eco-centric worldview and relationship with the natural world. As a result Duenkel theorized that people move from an anthropocentric (separate and superior to the natural world) to a "man-apart" (separate but not superior) worldview, before developing an eco-centric (not separate and not superior) worldview. Furthermore, although Duenkel chose her co-researchers for their essentially eco-centric philosophy, she noted that most would slip back to the man-apart stage to operate amidst the anti-ecological structures of everyday Canadian society. This suggests the difficulty in effecting change within individuals that will last after the wilderness trip ends and participants return to a social setting where a different ecological mindset exists.

Summary

My review of the literature shows a limited amount of research on the subjective experience of wilderness trip participants. There is even less research on how the participants use this experience when they return to everyday life. Most of the research in environmental education has been deterministic, focused on how the program affects change

in the individual. However, constructivist learning theory proposes the learners are the actors in the knowledge-making process. Experiential programs, like a wilderness program, are founded in constructivist epistemology.

There is a great deal of theory on the construction of nature and people's relations with the natural world. The literature is voluminous and as part of the hermeneutic cycle of this research project I have returned to different portions of the literature to assist understanding of the participants' experiences. A constructivist understanding approaches the development of a relationship with nature as an interplay between personal meaning-making embedded within a social context. The western worldview tends to view nature as an object to be used by humans, manipulated and controlled with no intentionality or value on its own. This cultural worldview influences the ways in which a person ascribes meaning to their experience in the natural world and understands nature.

Wilderness trips are a dramatically different experience for most people. A review of the research literature implies what intuition also suggests--that experience in the natural world may have a role in individuals developing an ecological sensitivity. But more work needs to be done on the phenomenon of experience in the natural world. The opportunity for affective bonding, connoted by the term sense of place, on a short wilderness trip is uncertain. Time, nature, and place tend to be taken for granted constructs. But they are part of what it means to develop a relationship with the natural world.

Humans experience the places in which they live and travel through affective and cognitive means. I remind myself as well as the reader that I come to this as a practitioner seeking to understand so that I can teach and lead wilderness programs to help participants come to a more respectful relationship with their environment. The above discussion has been fairly broad, but these constructs may have value in the development of an ecologically sensitive populace. This study hopes to begin filling the gap in research in participants' subject experience in the outdoors, and uncover ways this experience is being used afterwards.

The Questions of the Study

With this review in mind we can now refine the research project. Instructors assume that *something* is happening inside participants regarding the environment while on a wilderness trip. What is it? And how is it happening? **The basic purpose of this project is to investigate the developing relationship of the participants with the natural world**

during a wilderness trip and how this understanding is transferred home following the trip. Towards this end it is helpful to set out some sub-questions to guide this project.

1) What parts of the wilderness experience impacted the participants' perceptions of the natural world?

2) How do the participants experience nature on the trip and what role in this experience do other program elements play? Do the participants experience a sense of attachment to nature or the places to which the trip travelled.

3) How do the participants conceptualize nature on the trip and at home?

4) How do these perceptions transfer back home and what do the participants do with them? How are the participants using the experience to think about the environment and care for the environment at home?

5) What can wilderness leaders learn from this about our program leadership? What can we do to better teach *for* the earth?

CHAPTER THREE
BACK TO EARTH–METHODOLOGY

The best approach to investigating the questions outlined at the end of the previous chapter seemed to be a qualitative methodology under a constructivist paradigm. The goal of constructivist research is to reach a deeper understanding of the details of particular experience, rather than a broader and more general overview of a subject. The methods chosen can give voice to the complexity and power of experience in the natural world.

Interpretive Social Science

Research paradigms are defined by Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 105) as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways." Henderson (1991) describes the assumptions of interpretive research.

> Interpretive social scientists assume that social reality is multiple, divergent and inter-related. We might suggest that reality to the interpretive social scientist looks like your great grandmother's crazy quilt with pieces going every which way and in every colour. In the interpretive paradigm, social phenomenon are understood from the actor's own perspective and human behaviour is a product of how human beings define their world (p. 24).

The goal of interpretive social science is to reach a deeper understanding of the details of particular experience, rather than a broader and more general overview of a subject. Chief among the assumptions of the interpretive worldview is that contextualized meaning, rather than mechanistic cause and effect which ignores the cognitizing and self-reflective action of the individual, is the subject of inquiry, (Robertson, 1994). The goal of research, then, is to understand the constructions which people hold and use, and further, to understand how these constructions came to be held. Because of this, research design must be fluid and emergent. The interpretive researcher recognizes that all data may not be directly perceivable by the senses; therefore "intuition and contextual aspects must also be included in trying to understand how people live in everyday life" (Henderson, 1991, p. 25). Finally although it is informed by other theories and research, interpretive social research does not attempt confirmation or denial of pre-existing hypotheses. Instead, it is a process of description, analysis and interpretation emerging from the data collected and analyzed in an ongoing process (Henderson, 1991; Turner, 1981).

Methods Overview

This study involves two phases. In the first phase, as a participant-observer I accompanied a wilderness trip for teens run by a local outdoor education/recreation centre. The second portion of the study was to interview the participants after the trip.

Wilderness Explorations was a twelve day program run by the Strathcona Wilderness Centre (SWC). Eight youth, aged fourteen to sixteen years old, went on the trip. The teens chose to participate and paid a minimal amount for the trip. The leader and one participant was female. Due to personal issues one participant left the trip early. All the youth were from Strathcona County, most living in Sherwood Park, which is a community of 30,000 residents ten kilometres from the city of Edmonton. Strathcona Wilderness Centre runs recreational, educational and environmental programs for schools during the year on 550 acres of wooded land in the centre of the county. In the summer SWC runs daycamps and adventure based trips. The Wilderness Explorations trip took place just before school began at the end of August.

This trip was selected for several reasons. First, the twelve day length was long enough to allow for immersion in the wilderness experience and for significant social interaction to occur. Second, I was able to meet with the trip leader beforehand and discuss the program expectations and leadership philosophy. Third, the trip was one of few local programs of this type. Such accessibility was necessary to ensure participants would be located nearby for follow-up. Fourth, the participants on this trip would be meeting several times beforehand to plan the trip. This would allow me to build rapport and develop an appreciation of the trip leader's style as well as the orientation of the participants. Fifth, the teens had chosen to participate on the trip. They had not been forced or required. Finally, this organization is an outdoor education centre for schools. Consequently, I assumed the organization and staff had an interest in the educational and environmental character of encountering the wilderness.

The second section of the study followed up the participants with interviews at two points following the trip. The individuals were interviewed between eight and fourteen days after the trip. The second interview took place approximately six months later. The purpose of the second interview was to fill in gaps, explore their continuing constructions of wilderness, nature and environment and their participation in outdoor activities and environmental concerns in the half-year following the trip. The focus of both of these interviews was to reflect on the trip as well as the present reality in which the individual lives.

Participant Observation

The assumption of field research is that the researcher can share in the subject's world. "An observational method... places more emphasis on context and results in inferred interpretations of the student's knowledge-in-action" (Robertson, 1994, p. 27). Goodson and Mangan (1991) note that if curriculum studies are to be of use, they must begin with observation, theory growing from an understanding of curriculum that is actually produced. My stance was as an active participant, thus sharing an experience. Through active participation, additional questions related to the experience were expected to arise.

Participant observation is particularly adept at understanding the effect of personal interaction within a social milieu (Glancy, 1986). It has been used by researchers investigating wilderness tripping in the past. Henderson & Bialeschki (1987) explored the experience of a woman-only trip. Hunter (1987) used the method to develop grounded theory as to why adventure programs for adjudicated youth are successful with some youth and not others. Both felt the method appropriate in uncovering the character of what is often a very unbounded experience for participants.

One of the distinct disadvantages of participant observation is the immense amount of time it takes and the immense amount of data collected. The first six days were spent making descriptive observations. At this point I was able to withdraw for a night, review my notes, and develop some domains upon which to concentrate. I found it easy to get bogged down in further observation but not take the time to do the analysis which would focus observations more effectively. Spradley and others emphasize that the nature of everyday life is such that the researcher must somehow limit observations yet maintain accuracy of description. I utilized Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) as a reference as it employs methods for directing the observations into more carefully focused categories. The full sequence of the DRS was not applicable in the intense living arrangement.

My role on the trip was primarily to be as a non-leader. The original intent was to be merely an "adult along," which was how my role was described to the participants. However, I became more of a leader than expected for several reasons. It was a genuine effort for me to take the unaccustomed role of observer instead of a trip leader. In addition, the trip leader was less experienced in the mountain setting and relied more heavily on my experience than expected. I attempted to alleviate these role confusions by keeping in mind my purpose as a researcher, and by open discussion about the research with the trip leader and the participants.

In the pre-trip meetings my role was carefully explained and re-explained to the participants. I assumed a role of overt observation. I tape-recorded the initial meetings trying to build a comfort level among the participants for this action. Following Hunter's (1987) experience at the impracticality of his initial plans to only record his notes at night I openly took crib notes of conversation and events. Because of the living-together arrangement and my recognition of the limitations of my memory I endeavoured to make data collection as ordinary as possible. Care was taken to represent the participants in their own words and actions with researcher interpretations carefully noted.

Spradley (1980) notes that on-going analysis is important, commenting, "Analysis is a process of question-discovery" (p. 33). As questions or gaps in observations arise the researcher must seek illumination through new observation and participant input via informal interviewing. Observation of participant subjectivity--the internal processing of experience--is not possible. Therefore, informal interviewing was another method to ascertain the meaning action and experience has for the individual. "Informal interviewing occurs whenever you ask someone a question during the course of participant observation" (Spradley, 1980, p. 123). On-going discussion followed by continuing analysis yielded connective themes and gut reactions that could be followed up with the participants. I did encouraged questions from the participants about the research process. Occasionally they asked questions such as "Are you going to include that?" or "What are you writing?" Gary referred to himself as "a research colleague." But as Hunter (1987) discovered, the teens seemed to accept my role as one of the things adults sometimes do.

By clearly and openly discussing my role and purposes, I believe I was able to ask in-depth questions with acceptability. Undoubtedly these questions changed the nature of the experience as participants had to think about and articulate inner experiences not normally discussed. Although they joked about being in research, more than one participant said they got more out of the trip because of deeper reflection.

Interviewing

Henderson (1991) notes that interviewing is the best method for pursuing a subject in depth, creating interaction with an individual (and their conceptualizations) and remaining open to discovery. Difficulties with this method involve the level of honesty and articulateness of the participants and the influence of the researcher. Participants may tell the researcher what they think the researcher wants to hear, or create new histories or motives (Johnson & Sherman, 1990). Much responsibility is placed on the researcher to guide the conversation

in order to uncover the complexity of the individual's world but not direct responses. Still, interviews can be creative and provide rich founts of data, and challenging as the inner perspective of the interviewee is probed and unlocked (Henderson, 1991).

I spoke with each of the participants of the trip eight to fourteen days afterwards. The participants had seen me crawl groggily out of my sleeping bag, unwashed and smelly, grouchy with fatigue, playful, smelling flowers, dancing in the rain, and all the other facets of day-to-day living within the trip context. A relationship developed with some degree of reciprocity on each side. Therefore, in the interview, risk of fabrication was lessened as the participants knew where I was 'coming from.' Their willingness to state positions they knew to be at odds with my own as indicates less risk of fabrication.

A second interview was done five to six months later. Although recall of the trip experience occurred, this was not the concentration of the interview. Johnson and Sherman (1990) note that individuals tend to change their recollections over time to establish a better 'fit' with their present reality. Both interviews were set-up as conversationally as practical, as a mutual exploration of the subject (Henderson, 1991; Kirby & McKenna, 1989). The participants were teens after all, with an adult researcher; it was important to be it to their level (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Kirby and McKenna (1989) address several problems in interviewing when a power imbalance may be encountered. 'Researching down' must be avoided by consciously attending to an egalitarian setting. A continuing relationship should also be developed. Co-researchers may also desire to see transcripts, analysis or other materials. I suggested this possibility but the participants did not indicate a desire to read the transcribed recordings.

The interviews themselves became part of the trip experience. Several participants commented that knowing the interview was coming up, they thought about the trip, or that the interview questions got them to reflect more deeply upon the experience. Since these additional reflections were their own thoughts this is fully appropriate as a means of data collection. Not only did it provide richer data but it extended the educational value of the trip for these youth and made it more meaningful, as per good experiential learning theory.

Interviews were conducted in several settings. Most of the first round took place in local donut shops; one occurred in a local park and two more in participants' homes. All but two of the second round of interviews took place in participant's homes. Some questions were prepared ahead of time but the conversation was allowed to wander on tangents or interesting directions. The participants reacted differently to the interview structure. My reflection is that the interview format, although I tried to establish a comfortable conversation,

made a few of the participants nervous. Certainly I noticed a different comfort level between formal interviews back home and informal interviews on the trip. The interviews were audiotaped using a walkman-type tape recorder. Verbatim transcripts were prepared as soon as possible with inflection and non-verbal cues added. Participants were allowed to see the their transcript although none chose to. In the second interview emerging themes were checked and clarified.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of the data was an ongoing process. The analysis served to focus observation (Henderson, 1991; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Spradley, 1980). A grounded theory approach was used, allowing theory to emerge from the data rather than determined by *a priori* theory or hypotheses. Turner (1981) advocates grounded theory as promoting "the development of theoretical accounts and explanations which conform closely to the situations being observed" (p. 226-7). Goodson and Mangan (1991) also echo the importance of staying close to practitioner's common-sense knowledge, building upon it rather than supplanting it.

Efforts to improve the credibility of the data included writing the notes as soon as possible, informal interviewing to confirm or reject emerging interpretations, and attempting to quote the members as much as possible. All fieldnotes and interviews were transferred to a word processor. I then made a paper copy and read each part carefully. Eventually I used the word processor to split the interviews and fieldnotes into categories which were then compared. Some categories were collapsed together while others needed to be split. As the process continued I reread all material in their original contexts to avoid losing or altering the meaning. Relationships among categories began to be developed and broader themes became apparent. Turner (1986) notes that grounded theory depends on researcher intuition; technique should not be dogmatized.

Loaded as they are with conceptual baggage from another paradigm of scientific research I believe the conventional terms of reliability and validity should be replaced. Henderson (1991) asserts it is the researcher's responsibility to communicate the credibility of the data. "A study is credible if the reader gets involved in the description, understands how the researcher came to the conclusions, and sees the explicitness of important interpretations" (Henderson, 1991, p. 41). Most importantly, one should guard against a structure that would misrepresent rather than clarify. The way people construe their world tends to be "incoherent, only partially clear and not at all free from contradiction" (Schutz,

1973). The researcher, attempting to cut out the excess 'noise' of everyday life, walks a balance between highlighting the important and oversimplifying.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) insist that the writing must include the researcher's personal feelings and changes. To a large degree I used my experience, and parallels with other wilderness programs I had seen or instructed, to determine the viability of emerging themes. The analysis caused me to rethink ways that I had been leading wilderness trips. Since I was leading trips in the summer of 1995 after doing the bulk of analysis, I had opportunity to try out some of the conclusions and recommendations that were developing. Furthermore, I ran ideas past experienced leaders and was gratified to see that these conclusions seemed useful in describing some of the circumstances they had observed on wilderness programs. That the tentative conclusions seemed relevant to the field is another measure of credibility.

Writing the data is not just a means of communicating the conclusions to another. It is part of the process of analysis itself, a process the reader will go though as well (Clandenin and Connolly, 1994). Following Spradley's suggestions, I began writing notes and tentative interpretations as early as possible and continued this practice through every stage of the project. Since the writing is an interpretation of the experience of the participants, it can be considered an "imaginative creation" (Denzin, p. 54). Guba and Lincoln (1981) say that writing the report is about doing what the poets and anthropologists and novelists of all time have done: describe, judge and evoke the sense of having been there. The reader can then decide on the credibility of the research. As a trip participant, albeit in a different role and with dramatically different previous experiences, I hope this paper conveys the sense of the trip and resonates with the participants' experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR
DESCRIBING THE TRIP

This chapter will provide a context for the description of the participants' experiences of the Wilderness Explorations trip. It begins with a brief overview of Strathcona Wilderness Centre's (SWC) intents in running this program. The day-by-day itinerary of the trip is described. The participants will be introduced with a brief description. The chapter will conclude with a presentation of the ways the teens described the value of the trip for themselves.

SWC Purposes for the Trip

SWC had been running a year-round outdoor program for teens and Lynn had been the leader. The teen program consisted of monthly meetings, weekend trips nearly every month, and occasional special events. In the summer, Lynn led a variety of four and five day teen adventures involving canoeing, caving, climbing and other outdoor activities. SWC's purpose for the Wilderness Explorations trip was to offer a recreational program for teenagers. Lynn's desire was to lead a longer wilderness trip than she had done so far in her career.

Within the spectrum of outdoor pursuits providers, SWC intentionally situated itself among those providing recreational opportunities and a moderate educative component. Prior to the trip I had spoken with the director and summarized his version of SWC's role and the trip's purpose.

> He discussed SWC as a function of the Recreation Department. Challenge was not a big deal--they are not trying to turn people off. They want people to like the activities [and have a positive experience in the natural world]. "[Challenge] is just not our role," he said. "It is for other [programs]." People who go [to programs like Outward Bound] may be looking for a significant life experience [or make life decisions]. (Pre-trip notes, July, 14)

The director, who went by the 'environmental name' of Coyote, brought this issue up on Day Eight of the trip. The three of us were discussing how to deal with Peter's request to go home.

> Lynn and I talked and she wondered if we should let him go home. We then talked with Coyote who reiterated the philosophy of the SWC--that although they want some personal growth to occur, that's not the main focus. Not like Outward Bound [he said]. Maybe we should let him go home. We talked with Peter as a threesome to see

what's going on.... Coyote had said that... it should be Peter's choice. (Fieldnotes, Day Eight).

Both Coyote and Lynn expected that teens would experience personal growth as a result of the trip. When Coyote joined the group on Day Eight, he asked what I thought of the trip so far. I described the trip as "recreationally oriented and not focused on personal growth." This seemed to surprise him and he reiterated his philosophy that people will always grow from an experience like this. Although I agree, an argument of this thesis is that it is important to specifically prepare for more effective outcomes. Lynn had planned the trip and pre-trip meetings with a similar thought in mind; She and I had talked about program elements and ideas and continued to do so throughout the trip.

Lynn's philosophy was summed up in a quote prominently featured on all the pre-trip handouts. She recited it several times: "When people and wilderness are brought together there arises true potential for a profound and compelling experience."[7] During one of the pre-trip meetings she summed up,

> So that's one of the things on the trip. We want you to spend some time thinking about the trip, not just going out and playing. Of course we want you to play hard but think about some stuff as well. (Pre-trip Meeting #4, August 11)

Lynn established care for self, others and environment as the key goals for the trip. This was summed up in several ways on pre-trip information sent to each potential participant. Then, as Lynn led a discussion in the first pre-trip meeting on "What you might get out of this trip," Kenneth brought up "the three cares."

On the other hand, during the trip I was frustrated by my perception that these intents were not planned into the activities. As I wrote in my journal, "Lynn leads activities with less of a focus on challenging reflection to occur in the group or individuals (Fieldnotes, Day Three)." Implicitly I compared it with my experience with Outward Bound and other outdoor adventure programs, which have been more explicitly educational than recreational although both elements exist in various ways within all programs.

The Trip Itinerary

Overall, the trip was a very good experience for the teens. They consistently referred to it in very positive terms. These teens came together with little prior knowledge of each other. Four two-hour meetings were held prior to the trip. Lynn ran these meetings and

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[7]Commonly attributed to Stephen Bacon.

included a few 'get-to-know-you' activities and initiatives in the first two. The latter three included quick canoe and or kayak practice periods. The bulk of the meeting time consisted of discussion of itinerary, meals, equipment and other logistics.

Mackenzie and Bob had known each other from long involvement in SWC activities and teased each other at the early meetings. Kenneth knew the two of them from the same events. At the third meeting Danny brought JJ to the group. They had been friends for a long time, often hanging out together. Luke joined the group at the fourth meeting, having gone on a SWC trip two weeks before, a trip on which Bob had also participated. But except for these relationships, which were mostly acquaintances rather than friendships, the members did not know each other. Thus during the trip there was a growing sense of the group.

DAY ONE--Backpack beginning

The trip began on an early morning in mid-August. The five hour drive to the Kananaskis country of Alberta got us to the Mount Shark trailhead by early afternoon. The group made last minute adjustments to packs already organized, then hiked 9.6 km to the Bryant Creek campground. The route began as old logging roads. Soon it became a trail, but still wide. At the campsite with picnic table, outhouse and bearhang cable half the group made dinner after a stove lighting lesson. The other half set up the four tents. After dinner and hoisting all the food out of reach of big furry critters we held a community meeting and discussed the next day's plan. An entertaining and inspirational reading followed after which some people headed off to bed while others watched the sky for a short while and listened to more readings from the book.

DAY TWO--Backpack over Assiniboine Pass

Awakening at seven thirty the other cook group made breakfast. We began hiking over Assiniboine Pass, a long steady uphill hike. All morning and early afternoon the broad trail wound through the valley floor before narrowing into a rocky path on the hillside. The hikers regrouped at the top of the pass and went over together. Peter struggled with fatigue and at one point refused to go further. The other side of the pass was a gentle downhill in green meadows with spectacular views of Mt. Assiniboine. Hiking past the lodge and cabins we established camp on a designated tent platform. After cooking dinner and having a brief meeting the exhausted teens quickly fell asleep.

DAY THREE--Layover at Lake Magog

Today was a layover day--the group wouldn't move camp. The initial plan had been a dayhike to a small mountain nearby. Rain began at daybreak and continued off and on for the morning and early afternoon. During one downpour several of the group joined Lynn for a quick hike through trails becoming streambeds. At breakfast the rain turned to hail. During a sunny break most of the group took a walk to Lake Magog and hung out on the shore for a time; the remainder of the group hung wet equipment to dry in the campsite. After lunch some played hokey-pokey and other games in a new downpour, then the group walked to the ranger station and Assiniboine Lodge. Afterwards, we did an hour-long solo experience around the rocky shores of the lake. The evening events, led by Lynn, were a series of fun camp games and a quick debrief of the day. The teens really liked the games. While a few teens looked at the moon and Big Dipper the others headed for bed.

DAY FOUR--Backpack over Wonder Pass to Marvel Lake

This day was a sunny day that got hot as the group hiked in direct afternoon sun. I organized a litter pick-up competition for the day. We left Lake Magog and went over Wonder Pass. Peter was proud to be the first to the top. Down the other side we had an awe inspiring view of shining cobalt Marvel Lake. Then we took a long lunch break throwing rocks and watching a marmot. The trail stayed high on the hillside above the lake and most of the group ran out of water. Individuals waded or swam in the Lake's cold waters during late afternoon. At camp the group decided who won the litter contest. Dinner was a series of creative mini-pizzas. Cleanup took a long time. The community meeting was short and focused on when to get up the next day.

DAY FIVE--Transition from backpacking to other segments

The group hiked quickly out of the backcountry towards 'civilization' and reached the van shortly after lunch. Throwing the gear in the vehicle we headed down the road with the music loud. In Canmore the group stopped at the IGA to purchase additional food for the next several days, then drove through Banff National Park and east into David Thompson Country. At Kootenay Plains we stopped at the group campground where we would rock climb tomorrow. The group had a small fire--the first of the trip and something that would occur each day for the rest of the trip. The evening meeting took place on a hillside above the camp. It began with a remembrance of the backpack trip and ended with a ceremony.

Each person shared personal traits he or she would use for the group's benefit the rest of the trip.

DAY SIX--Rock climbing at Cavalcade Campground

Upon awakening several people washed their faces in either water heated on the stove or at the water pump. Luke was frustrated at the long breakfast preparation and clean-up. The climbing instructor was prepared at nine in the morning, although when we reached him on the top of the cliffs overlooking the camping area it was ten o'clock. Osprey was known to many of the teens. After teaching knots and harnesses he used Bob as a rappelling demonstrator. Each person got a chance to rappel. Following this was a bouldering session and climbing on three ropes. The teens belayed each other under the watchful eye of Osprey, Lynn or myself. Peter was noticeably more hesitant than the others. At the end of the day the hardest climb was tried by many of the teens. Some then went down to begin dinner while others tried a more challenging rappel. After dinner the group walked to an old Sun Dance lodge. The evening meeting focused on how the group could work together and get their camp chores done better, the next day's plan and an appropriate wakeup time. Another short solo experience was planned but darkness came and we walked back to camp.

DAY SEVEN--Hike to Wapiabi cave

After a leisurely morning the group left the campground at 11:00. The drive east, then north, on the Forestry Trunk road took nearly two hours. Lynn, with less caving experience, asked if I would be leader for the day. Heading down a trail along a river, the path soon took a steep and exposed turn upward. By mid afternoon JJ and Danny were too nervous to continue. The group discussed the situation and decided that those who wanted to push hard for the top would go on with me while the others waited at this place. Kenneth, Mackenzie, Gary and Luke formed what we called the 'Expeditionary Crew.' Moving quickly up a scree slope we climbed to a peaklet and saw the cave on another ridge. Because of the lateness of the day we could only go in a short distance before returning to the surface and running and bootskiing down the scree and forest moss. The four teens found the challenge of this expedition to be one of their highlights on the trip. The others had hung out--throwing rocks and playing word games. The whole group moved quickly down the mountain, boot skiing where possible. Back in the van we drove to a developed campground. Arriving at dark, we

cooked Luke's 'drumsticks and chipmunks' (hotdogs and s'mores) over the campfire. Some of the teens slept under the stars.

DAY EIGHT--Canoe School at the Brierleys

Enough rain spat at us early in the morning to send most of the group scurrying for shelter under a tarp. Peter stayed out. After a short van ride toward Rocky Mountain House, the group unloaded the canoes and two kayaks onto the bank of the North Saskatchewan River. Practicing strokes and other techniques the group canoed a half dozen kilometres to the takeout. After lunch we shuttled back up and did the stretch again, this time including the large standing waves of the large rapid called the Brierleys. Several boats tipped in rapids or waves and Peter and Bob went down the large Brierleys backwards and uncontrolled. A number of teens also bodysurfed the wave at the bottom of the rapid, as did all the adults. After stopping for supplies in Rocky Mountain House, we drove an hour upstream to another put-in near Nordegg. At this time, Peter told Lynn that he wanted to leave the trip. Lynn and I spoke with him; he would go back with the canoe instructor. Peter told the group just after dinner, then they left. The group meeting following dinner cleanup was strained. JJ surprised everyone by being upset that he couldn't leave also. Mackenzie felt the group was falling apart. No one else really said anything so the meeting disbanded.

DAY NINE--First day of the canoe trip

Packing took place in the sunshine following breakfast. The loaded canoes headed downstream as people worked to sort out paddling and steering strokes. We encountered some rapids but the water level on the river was low so none of the waves were as large as expected. Lunch took place at a beach as the sky clouded over and sprinkles fell. After JJ and I successfully negotiated a wave and ledge that we were supposed to avoid, Gary and Luke swamped and had to swim their canoe to shore. Late in the afternoon the group pulled into Saunders campground and set up camp. After cleaning the trash strewn about the campsite, a fire was lit and oars and rope were used to rig a drying line. A long dinner prep ensued. Afterwards Lynn cleaned up as the teens were sent out for alone time. Most either walked about the campground together or napped in their tents. At the evening meeting the group discussed the feeling of wilderness and explorations. Although everyone else went quickly to bed, Mackenzie, Luke, Lynn and I stayed around the fire and talked about why we like outdoor recreation activities.

DAY TEN--Second day on river

After a long breakfast the group began canoeing. The morning had been a little chillier than we were used to. Other boaters were on the river, including two large voyageur canoes that Bob engaged in a water fight, much to his partner Gary's dismay. It began to rain later in the day and was still wet when we arrived at the campground. JJ went to the washroom as the group unloaded. Since this had happened frequently, the group chose to push his boat, with his gear still unloaded, into the middle of a side channel so he was forced to wade in to retrieval it. During the rest of the afternoon and evening much teasing of Mackenzie and general horseplay occurred as dinner was cooked. The evening discussion was mostly teen run as they talked about whether or not they were looking forward to the end of the trip and going home.

DAY ELEVEN--Last day on river

This day was Cloudy and cool all day. Bob and I canoed together again. After getting wet early he was cold and quiet most of the day. Gradually, the pine forested hills dwindled to pasture and farmland as more and more houses and other developments became visible. The teens rafted together occasionally although Bob did not want to. Mackenzie and Luke swamped in the Brierleys. The group pulled together to help the two canoeists swim to shore. Someone gave them dry clothes while others rescued assorted gear that had floated free of the canoe. The last five kilometres passed through the town of Rocky Mountain House to a trailer campground on the other side. In the cold, wet weather the last few kilometres seemed interminable. Eventually we reached the campground. Our site was clearly developed and included an unlit shelter with a woodstove. Under the guise of looking for firewood, several of the boys wandered off and located the RV park and pool room with television. The rest of the group prepared a memorable steak dinner and ate it while waiting for the others to return. At the fire we ate s'mores of chocolate and marshmallow while talking about the canoe and backpack segments and the perception of risk. Although the skies promised rain, only Kenneth and Bob had set up shelters; everyone else slept outside. Early in the morning, a steady drizzle began that lasted nearly until noon. JJ, Danny and Gary moved into a picnic shelter but the others stayed out in the drenching rain or in their tents.

DAY TWELVE--Return to Edmonton

When Lynn awoke up she drove to the grocery store. She returned and prepared a spectacular breakfast of pancakes and fruit. Afterwards, she sent everyone off to think about

the trip. Returning in an half hour we discussed the trip highlights, then went around the circle and talked about what would be remembered about each person. Then everyone piled into the van and drove back to Edmonton. Parents were waiting at the parking lot, gear was quickly grabbed and everyone headed on their way.

The People

My impression of these trip participants--taken from years of working with youth--was that they were an 'ordinary' set of individuals. As a group, they came together with little knowledge of each other before the trip except for the four pre-trip meetings which not all attended. Each had his or her own interests, problems and ways of dealing with life and trip circumstances. They came with a variety of prior experiences, expectations and motivations. The continuing incentive for me to work with youth in wilderness settings is this diversity.

A thumbnail sketch of each person follows. Each sketch contains several parts--my impressions of the person and our relationship, special incidents on the trip, and a summary of how the person viewed the natural world. In such a sketch the complexity of the individual has been confined: hopefully, the following chapters will help to drape the flesh of character upon the bare skeleton of this sketch.

LUKE: The elder statesman with the 'Tilly' hat

Luke joined the group after the first two pre-trip meetings. He had gone on a prior SWC trip and was sold on this longer one. Luke was fun-loving, enthusiastic and rarely lacked a smile--his 'Tilly' became an object of jest. Average in height and stocky in build, he thoroughly enjoyed the trip and tended to see everything positively. He was also the oldest teen, the only one with a driver's license. Luke took a strong leadership role on the trip. He brought creative meals, often cleaned up and encouraged others. He and Mackenzie found they had much in common and hung out a lot together. After he had replaced the thin, cold sleeping bag he had taken on the backpack segment, Luke and Mackenzie usually slept outside of the tents or tarps. Luke frequently stated how much he liked the climbing and camping and his intent to pursue them. However, back at home he reinvolved himself in cars, jazz band, sports and other interests.

Luke is an articulate and reflective teen. He and I would often hang around the campfire with Mackenzie and Lynn. The interviews were an easy conversation. On the trip we would often talk about nature and wilderness. I initiated this with a question on Day One, but Luke would return to the topic frequently. For Luke the feeling of being in the wilderness

was strongest when there was less evidence of humans, i.e. narrow trails instead of the wide gravel path. He felt a stronger connection when only a few people were around. "I love nature for the beauty and the animals. Wish I could have been here a hundred years ago." He felt that "out there" was more free and relaxing. He also stated that he liked the outdoors partly because "it doesn't matter what you look like." He even expressed a type of self-identification with Nature saying, for example, that he wanted "to be that hill." That was a feeling he certainly couldn't get in the city although he said he liked cities too, partly for the opportunity to work, party and do things.

KENNETH: The quiet, stable one

Kenneth was quiet, understated and focused. He was only able to attend the first two meetings, but took upon himself the task of looking for backpacking route ideas. Then, while on a family trip to British Columbia he faxed his menu ideas to the group so final plans could be made. Although he rarely joined in horseplay or teasing, he did help several others tie Lynn in her sleeping back and bundle her out of the tent one morning. Kenneth found the backpack portion of the trip very strenuous and tiring. He had backpacked on shorter trips with the Boy Scouts. He had also been involved with the SWC, volunteering enough over the previous winter to earn enough credits to pay for the entire trip. Canoe tripping and the cave hike were new experiences, therefore highlights for him. During the climbing he showed obvious but typically well-contained enthusiasm. Kenneth provided a memorable steak meal to conclude the trip as well as other tasty and substantial meals. He could be expected to participate in clean-up on most meals. At camp he set up his tent immediately and slept in it every night.

For Kenneth the wilderness, or Nature, is "unsettled, where people leave it." To experience nature was one of the primary reasons for which he came on this trip. Nature was different than home, therefore unfamiliar and interesting. Kenneth stated at several points that anything familiar, like the woods of the Wilderness Centre, couldn't be Nature. He was adamant at the negative role of the van, saying it segmented the trip and hindered the experience of nature.

The trip was just one experience of Kenneth's year, not something that "sticks out." Back in school he is engaged in computers and other pursuits. Although the trip was good and he likes the outdoors I found it challenging to draw out Kenneth's perspectives in detail during the interviews. He expressed hesitancy at my tendency to follow-up his response to

a previous question with a clarifying question. Kenneth was the only teen who said that the research process and talking about the trip had not made him more aware of these subjects.

GARY: Keen on Climbing

Gary was known for his odd haircut--a dark flop that hung over the shaved underside of his skull--and his dangling earring in the shape of a skeletal fish. Average in height but thin, he was one of the younger teens on the trip. He used certain facial contortions and vocal expressions to amused others. He tended to sit back, although listened closely and shared his thoughts frequently in community meetings. All the outdoor activities were new to him; the only camping he had done before had been with a motorhome. Gary alternated between sleeping in a tent, under the tarp or outside of both. He tended to hike in the middle of the pack and sit in the middle of the van, but moved around some also. He felt a strong sense of accomplishment for both Assiniboine Pass and finishing the entire length of the backpacking. He was electrified by the rockclimbing and was one of the "Expedition Crew" who went all the way to the cave. Other highlights included swamping his canoe on a surprise ledge and working to rescue a flipped canoe at another time.

Gary frequently asked questions about the research, particularly during the trip as I was taking field notes. He called himself a "research colleague." On the other hand, he was the toughest interview--both times had a Q & A pattern rather than being conversational. We met in the local McDonald's and the library. Still, there was a formality and discomfort that was not evident on the trip and he gave only short, quick responses.

The trip was one of Gary's four main highlights from the year. The specific activities and the challenge were vital to him. The natural setting seemed to play a minimal role. He gave the impression that Nature was not a topic that he thought much about. He thought the van was good as a place that was warm, "had floors and stuff" and because "we got to listen to music and get to know each other."

MACKENZIE: The Group Maintainer

Tall and athletic, Mackenzie plays a variety of sports at school. She was among the hardiest of the group, pushing herself to reach the top of Assiniboine Pass with the first person, and paddling the kayak more kilometres than anyone. The Expedition Crew was a highlight for the sense of accomplishment at pushing herself physically and mentally.

Loud, cheerful and enthusiastic, Mackenzie liked to laugh and often woke the group by song. At meals, she would always help out. She was the only female among the teens on

the trip. She was teased unmercifully by some of the others. Mackenzie was clearly the group motivator and more focused on the group relations than the rest. "We all made it and we made it as a group," she said at the end of the backpack segment. She was upset by Peter's early departure from the group and the trip.

I also found Mackenzie very reflective and articulate. She liked to tease me and many an evening, she, Lynn, Luke, and myself would stay up chatting after the community meeting. She and Luke became good friends. Mackenzie said she's "grown a lot" through the SWC trips, describing increased patience, responsibility, ability to finish tasks and take criticisms as ways she had grown in the past year.

Mackenzie came into the trip with the most experience with the SWC and on other trips. The river was familiar to her, so did not seem as natural as the mountains had. She preferred the backpacking segment. Nature, for Mackenzie, is places that are unknown and undisturbed. SWC is not nature because it is too familiar. Sleeping outside the tent or tarp, which she and Luke did each of the last four nights was a way to feel closer to nature. She felt far more relaxed on the trip than at home, beauty made her slow down from the busyness of home, she said. Mackenzie indicated a concern for the environment and "loves the outdoors."

JJ: The loud one

JJ joined the group for the third meeting. Boisterous in all his interactions he became somewhat of the group clown. A natural storyteller who physically dramatised most of his tales, JJ said his contribution to the group would be to "share all my jokes with everybody... and my high energy level." Gary said "doesn't that guy ever shut up?"

Backpacking was a new experience and became a highlight. "I thought I would hate it but I liked it" he said. On the other hand, he frequently made comments that "we should hike out right now and go home." During the steep and exposed hike to the cave he grew increasingly apprehensive. Eventually he refused to go further. During canoeing he avoided most of the big waves. He was fascinated by a deer and chased it for a picture. He threw himself with amazing vigour into the litter pick-up competition, even to the point of pulling a grill out of a lake. "It feels good to give to the earth" he said, and "to make it nice" for other people.

JJ had a tendency to be self-focused and was angry at Peter's departure from the trip, primarily because he himself also wanted to go home. At the last campground, he wandered with a couple of other teens up to the hall with pool table and television, instead

of hanging with the group in the site. JJ's avoidance of work became legendary; at cleanup he would usually be found in the outhouse.

JJ said he is no longer as worried about being in the woods because now he knows what he is doing. He felt strongly that, somehow, he belongs out there. He liked the feeling; it was "like you were supposed to be there your whole life" he said. Being part of the scene at home is important to JJ. At home he is very busy with sports, girls, cars, and parties. He has been suspended from school many times, including the day of the first interview only a week into the new school year. JJ and I got along well and teased each other. He was very easy to talk with and able to express his feelings and impressions from the trip well.

BOB: Liked to Play

Bob had been involved in every type of program run at the SWC in his lifetime. The youngest of all the participants, he enjoyed teasing and playing. On the first day of the trip, he was the only one who waded in the stream. Bob came to all the pre-trip meetings. His previous experiences gave him ideas for food and activities. Sometimes however, he would divert focus with a series of comments like, "Everest... that's the only place I wanna go." Bob knew both Lynn and Mackenzie and had gone on a previous SWC trip with Luke earlier in the summer.

Bob was keen on rock climbing, trying every climb and rappel. The backpack segment was very fatiguing. On the hike to the cave he stayed back when the 'expedition crew' continued to the top. He seemed to enjoy the canoe trip. A highlight was his accidental backwards run down a big set of rapids with Peter. Bob tended to "do his own thing," as one person said. After Peter departed Bob was the low person in the group structure; several of the others and he had verbal altercations.

In the interviews Bob seemed nervous, although denied this. He was recalcitrant in responding to questions. "I'm not a teacher," he said, "I don't think deeply or analyze these things." I wondered if I was putting answers in his head in suggesting ways to articulate his responses. This he also denied. Even on the trip I had the sense that he would not share his thoughts unless he 'forgot' this role. In community meetings he rarely shared his thoughts, saying "others have probably said them already." He liked needling me on being an American and a "yankee." Occasionally, however he showed surprising insight.

Although he likes the outdoor trips that he takes with SWC every summer, these activities are not something Bob maintains in the school year. The trip was "fun," the activities were "fun." Nature, meaning undisturbed places without humanmade intrusions,

was important because he likes outdoor activities. But he doesn't think much about the trip anymore, or have any involvement in outdoor or environmental activities besides the family recycling.

PETER: Remain Reserved and Left on Day Eight

The opportunity to plan the trip was the reason Peter got involved in the trip. He pushed to include mountain biking or a peak climb in the itinerary and was excited to be caving. Peter did not know anyone before the trip and maintained his distance. After sharing a tent with Gary on the backpack segment he slept apart from the other teens. He seemed more drawn to me. Often he would talk to me, both during the meetings and on the trip. We also went mountain biking together a couple of months after the trip.

Peter was dealing with some serious issues at home and in his personal life. The details are not important to the discussion here. He said that he was thinking about these issues a lot, although he hadn't started thinking about them until the trip. This is why he left the trip early. Afterwards he felt this had been the best solution. Peter's early departure was the only major inter- or intrapersonal issue the trip participants and leaders had to deal with during the twelve days.

Peter struggled greatly on the backpack segment. He was very tired and seemed frustrated at being behind everyone else. At one point on Day Two he could not hike any more and had the group wait for a half hour while he recuperated. Peter found it quite hard not to smoke; he did sneak off to smoke on occasion. A highlight was being the first person to the top of Wonder Pass two days later. He also enjoyed sliding down the scree on the day hike to the cave, which he stopped short of reaching. He found the rappelling and rock climbing very challenging. Although he tended to be reserved, he did get involved with others. He said another highlight was hiding rocks in JJ's pack, a joke he and Danny masterminded. He and Bob went down one large rapid backwards. Not surprisingly, both blamed the other's paddling, but both mentioned the incident as a highlight.

The interviews were difficult with Peter. His responses were short and lacked elaboration. This may have been because he didn't have much to say on these subjects since they were not really his interests. He tended to be closed and self-contained, but with the issues and early departure I wonder if he was ever in the mental "place" where he could think much about nature or the places in which we travelled. The Wilderness Explorations trip was not set up with therapeutic intent.

Peter said he does not think about the trip much. There seems to be a distancing and lack of closure to the experience. He said the trip would have been "better if I could have finished, if those things weren't going on." How the early departure affected the way he related to the natural world was unclear; Peter seemed among the least interested in the environment, outdoor activities or the natural world. For him nature is important because "it is nice and all. It's natural... undisturbed, by humans that is." Primarily the value of the trip was to go somewhere he had not been before.

DANNY: Easy Going

With his dyed hair, mile-wide skater jeans and big grin, Danny personified a laidback, easygoing image. He had easy enthusiasm for most of the activities and was rarely harsh with other participants. At first, he and JJ spent a lot of time together but this diminished over the course of the trip.

Danny seemed to enjoy the trip, although he also missed the comforts of home. He liked the canoeing in part because we went faster and farther than while backpacking. He was very nervous at the steep and exposed hike up to the cave and finally, with JJ, insisted he could not go further. Danny sat in the front bench of the van and took control of the music selection. He put on deodorant frequently, and washed his hair and shaved on the trip also. At the last campground he went with JJ and found the shower and TV room.

The most important aspects of the trip for Danny were the opportunities to meet new people and do new activities. He wants to do more trips to the mountains, especially mountain biking with a friend but only if they go to a place he knows. He felt he was gaining 'maturity' over the past year and that the trip was only one of many steps in this process. For Danny, nature is "where nobody's around" and "no one lives there." Although he said the environment is important, he doesn't think about it or nature at home. Still, he preferred the feeling of freedom in being in a natural setting to that of the city.

Danny's own admission was that he is not a deep thinker. I found him easy to talk to and honest in his comments. He had no difficulty talking about the things of interest or relevant to his immediate circumstances--cars, girls, music, friends. But he struggled to discuss things not directly related to specific, immediately memorable incidents. "It's like I draw a mental blank," he said. "When I get asked questions I need to plan them. I don't relate things that fast. Like I can't relate to what I've done." It was clear even before the second interview that the interests of this study were rare objects of thought for Danny.

LYNN: The Trip Leader

Lynn was the leader of the Wilderness Explorations trip. She is an energetic, enthusiastic, cheery leader who always had a smile on her face and fun silly jokes, stories and games. She went by the 'environmental name' of "Summer Wind" which fit her personality. I did not know her before the trip; we have since become friends, swapped dinner invitations, mountain biked and climbed together on occasion. Lynn got along very well with the teens. Luke was not the only one who said she was a "great leader." The teens appreciated her energy and ideas.

Lynn has been in the outdoor education field for several years in both instructional and program administrator roles, primarily in summer camp and outdoor school programs for pre-teens. She is a full-time staff member at SWC and runs an outdoor club from the Strathcona Wilderness Centre. This trip was her first opportunity to lead a longer, adventure-based program for teens. She had done several five-day frontcountry trips earlier in the summer. Lynn has done a lot of canoe tripping. On the canoe segment she was much more relaxed and less frenetic than the other segments. It was obvious that this is her favoured element. Her personal mountain experience was less extensive. She stated that it was easier to rely on my leadership experience on the first portion, which was the backpacking. Lynn asked me to take lead for the day on which we would go caving since she had only done this activity once. She felt the trip had been very successful and she had also learned a lot. One of her goals, which she felt had been accomplished, was for the teens to "feel they planned and had control in the trip."

For the reader's later referral, Figure 1 lists all the participants.

VALUE--WHY GO, NOT WINNEBAGO

The participants were unequivocally positive in their assessment of the trip. Every one of them stated emphatically that the trip was fun. "It was an exciting trip and I loved doing it," said Kenneth. Months later, the trip was the "best part of last year" for JJ. Gary recalled it as one of the events in that time span he would tell others about. Each of the other teens had similar comments.

The teens were not unanimously fond of the same points. But the memories of a positive experience dominated their perception. The teens gave these reasons as explanation why the trip was so good:

- the activities done (backpacking, canoeing, climbing, etc);
- meeting new people and being part of a group;

Figure 1. List of Participants.

THE TRIP MEMBERS	
Luke	The elder statesman with the Tilly hat.
Kenneth	The quiet, stable one.
Gary	Keen on climbing.
Mackenzie	The group maintainer.
JJ	The loud one.
Bob	Liked to play.
Peter	Remained reserved and left on Day Eight.
Danny	Easy going.
Lynn	The trip leader.
Osprey	Climbing instructor.
Coyote	SWC Director and canoeing instructor.

- the natural setting;
- challenge;
- getting away from home;
- self-reflection or personal growth.

The activities were a major draw. The pre-trip planning process ensured that some activities each teen wanted would be included. Peter wanted mountain biking, but was happy with the plans to go caving and attempt to climb a peak. Mackenzie was more excited by the backpack trip and less by the canoeing; Danny felt the opposite. None of the participants had done all the activities; most had done only one or two, usually in a less ambitious manner than our itinerary involved. They desired a new and novel experience.

"Meeting new people" was also frequently mentioned as an important reason for considering the trip worthwhile. A few minor altercations occurred and Peter left on Day Eight. These were the only problems. Few of the teens knew each other well before the trip, although they were occasionally acquainted with each other from school, sports or previous SWC events. Danny and JJ, as good friends before the trip, were the only exception.

After these two reasons, being in a natural setting was much less frequently mentioned by most of the teens as an important reason to go on the trip. Still, it had some significance for each person as further query revealed. Nature was a "major, major part," said Luke. Gary said being outdoors had "some importance." Bob said, "[I] like to do stuff in a natural setting... [where it is] undisturbed." "[I] like it [nature], but it's not a need," said Kenneth.

Being away from home and challenging themselves were also mentioned by the teens as reasons the trip was good. The teens saw the trip as an opportunity to seek the stimuli of new experiences and dramatically different environments and events, and to escape the everyday routine of home and family. None of the participants indicated there were serious problems at home beyond the ordinary teenage condition. Mackenzie expressed the predictability of being at home,

> Probably the first half an hour I was kind of excited to be home. Then I'm like, 'well this is crappy, I want to go back [on the trip]'... I knew exactly what would happen [at home], I knew who was there. I knew everything that was going on.

Few of the teens mentioned personal growth explicitly as a reason which motivated them to go on the trip, or which was important while on the trip. JJ, Mackenzie and Luke were the only ones to expressly value personal growth or self-awareness at the time.

However, several others did so in later interviews. Mackenzie, Kenneth, and Luke said they had grown as a person or in maturity or confidence from previous SWC trips and Individuals mentioned similar ideas as a benefit in later interviews.

Although these reasons have been presented separately, it is important to recognize that the trip was a unified experience, as Mackenzie stated after commenting on how good the trip was:

> RBD: So if you had to say what would be the most important to you, would it be the social aspects, the natural setting, the activities we did, being able to challenge yourself, something else?
>
> MACKENZIE: I couldn't single it out. Like they all make it the most important. Like without one of them it was just going to be crappy. Well not crappy, but not to the point where we had it.

The teens had a satisfying time on the trip. They increased their comfort level camping in the backcountry. They tried new things and experienced a more natural setting. They grew more comfortable challenging themselves on the various activities. Finally, the trip was another step on that myth[8] of inexorable growth through personal experiences.

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[8]I use this word 'myth' in Campbell's (1988) sense of 'sacred story' that undergirds a culture. In the outdoor and experiential education culture the notion of growth is often provided as justification for the experiences provided. Personal growth is expected, but ill-defined. While I believe in the notion, I also feel it needs a direction, else it simply becomes personal change rather than growth. Furthermore, without clear expectations and planning for the outcomes the 'education' is often ill-focused. Shoot at the side of a barn and you'll hit it but so what?

CHAPTER FIVE
THE GROUP RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

The social group was an important part of the trip experience. The interactions of the participants with each other influenced the experience of nature on and following the trip. Selected social themes will be described in this chapter. It is important to note that this chapter is not intended to be a complete ethnography of the trip and social interaction. In addition to the pragmatic need to limit the overwhelming task of describing the entire society formed on the trip, these themes are chosen based upon the primary interest in this study: to investigate the developing relationship with the natural world during a wilderness trip and how this understanding is transferred home following the trip. The first section of this chapter will describe some of the major themes; the second section will present examples of these themes in action.

CULTURAL THEMES

Teens Interacting With Teens In The Wilderness

Lynn established rudimentary group norms by leading a discussion at the first meeting about the nature of "community." This is a typical aspect of SWC trips (and most adventure education), a familiar concept to the four with previous SWC experience.

> LYNN: As we go through this trip, there's the eight of you, plus two.... We're going to be together for two weeks. Yeah, that's a scary thought. And [what] we're going to develop, because we're together we have to interact with each other... is something called community. (Pre-trip Notes, July 11)

She asked the teens what needed to happen for that sense of community to develop. Discussion was quick and superficial. Items like cooperation and trust were suggested. Lynn then defined community from the dictionary. At the end of the trip Lynn brought up the concept again in the'community meeting' on the last night.

> LYNN: After two weeks together as a group--instead of focusing on what we did--did we form a community?
>
> (several yeses).
>
> MACKENZIE: What was the definition of a community again?
>
> LYNN: What was the definition of a community?
>
> GARY: Where's your dictionary? Come on, you're supposed to be the leader here.

LYNN: Community is a group of persons in the same situation that support each other and that survive together. Does that fit us?

GARY: Yep. (Fieldnotes, Day Twelve)

The teens felt this sense of community. Meeting new people and becoming friends were named as highlights when discussing the trip afterwards. Although they recount the stories of the activities, it was the interactions within the group that were most important in valuing the experience. Listed in Figure 2 are the basic cultural themes that will be addressed below.

Spradley (1980) suggests that an organizing domain of a culture is a theme that is found in many other domains. The tension diagrammed in Figure 3 is the organizing domain of the mini-society created in this trip. Many of the aspects of the group formed on this twelve day trip can be understood in the light of the tension diagrammed in Figure 3. The teens were pulled in two directions by the desire to explore an unfamiliar experience while keeping a measure of the familiar reality with which they were comfortable. A number of cultural themes arose through the twelve days that the group was together. These influence the participant's experience of and relationship to the natural world.

The members sought ways to balance the challenge of the unfamiliar with the routine of the accustomed, even to the point of domesticating it and making it like home. An incident with JJ represents this tension. On Day Four of the backpacking segment, I recorded in fieldnotes the following incident.

We saw a trail sign at the top of Wonder Pass. The sign told us it was 18.7 km to Spray Lakes, our trailhead. JJ instantly declared "Let's get it over with."

"Are you not having fun?" I asked because he seemed to be.

"Yes, I am," JJ insisted. "But I still want to get there."

As I recorded this incident I also added a personal note: "The teens will talk constantly about what they are missing at home. How do they deal with these contradictions [of liking it here and wanting home]?" Even more important is to recognize that the apparent contradiction is present, as contradiction is usually present in the complexities of everyday life and to discern how the teens try to make sense of it in their actions on the trip. Like the two-headed Pushmipullmi of Doctor Doolittle tales, there is a yearning to go two directions

Figure 2. Cultural Themes of the Social Group on the Wilderness Trip.

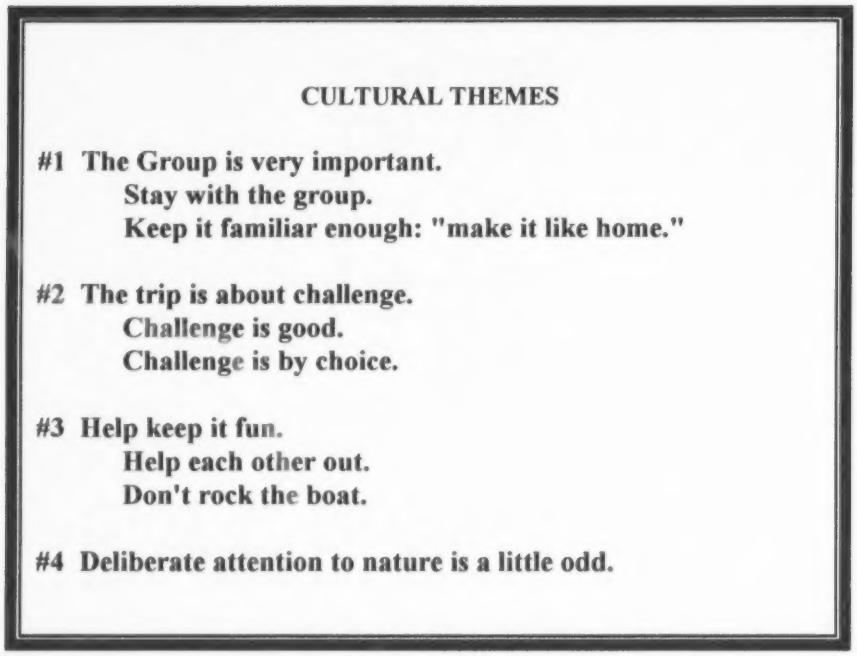
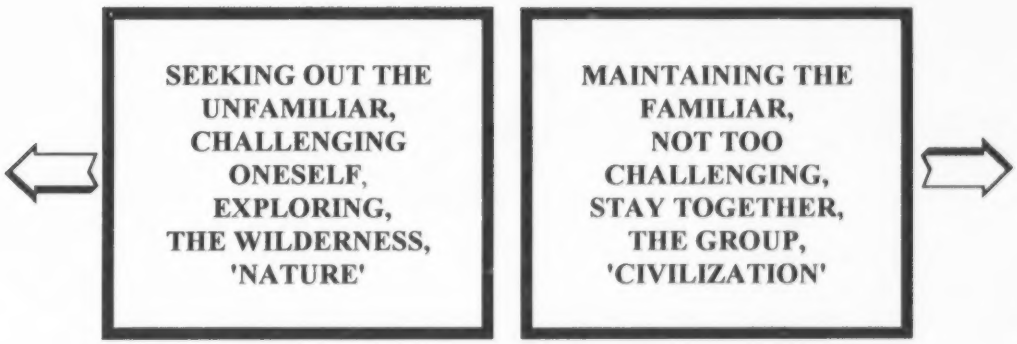

CULTURAL THEMES
#1 The Group is very important.
Stay with the group.
Keep it familiar enough: "make it like home."
#2 The trip is about challenge.
Challenge is good.
Challenge is by choice.
#3 Help keep it fun.
Help each other out.
Don't rock the boat.
#4 Deliberate attention to nature is a little odd.

Figure 3. The organizing domain of the wilderness trip experience.


SEEKING OUT THE UNFAMILIAR, CHALLENGING ONESELF, EXPLORING, THE WILDERNESS, 'NATURE'
MAINTAINING THE FAMILIAR, NOT TOO CHALLENGING, STAY TOGETHER, THE GROUP, 'CIVILIZATION'

The Group's Evolution Over Twelve Days

As the trip progressed the participants seemed to make more effort to focus their attention on other group members. Commensurately, the experience of the natural setting depreciated in significance. The fieldnotes are full of instances early in the trip where participants noticed things related to nature, or talked about it spontaneously. The number of recorded incidents dwindled as the trip went on.

For example, meals, which are often a focal social gathering on wilderness trips, became increasingly important as the trip progressed. These provide an example of the change in group cohesiveness. Meals were assigned in pre-trip meetings. The assigned teen was to bring enough food to feed everyone for that meal. At our first night's campsite, I recorded,

> Danny and JJ wandered down to the creek and splashed around. So did other teens as the evening wore on. Someone discovered a waterfall upstream. Luke went for a walk. Someone else found the bear hang. All this occurred while they were learning how their tents were put up. (Fieldnotes, Day One)

For comparison, the preparation and dinner of Day Ten took almost three hours. Yet in that time, and the additional two preceding hours since we had arrived, no one left the campsite. Instead, they chopped wood, horsed around with each other, teased Lynn, made hot drinks, prepped the spaghetti dinner in several courses, built and played with the fire.

As the group became a more important component of the trip experience there was less wandering off, writing in journals or otherwise taking solitary personal time. The members of the group who were not prepping hung around the prep area more as the trip passed. And the amount of time and quality of effort spent in meal preparation increased.

However, the group experience was also uneven. After Peter left, there was a decline in a feeling of cohesion; it took some time to recover. Peter's decision to leave the trip early was unexpected. JJ, who apparently also wanted to go home, grew angry and remained so through the later community meeting that evening. Mackenzie said after the trip that the situation affected the atmosphere of the group for some time.

> When Peter left it just didn't seem like some people wanted to be there. It kinda brought the group down cause we were kind of... at this high point. Like we were really together as a group. And after he left... we kind of split apart. So it took us almost all the canoe and kayak trip to bring us to that high again. (Interview one)

Mackenzie noted that Bob became the odd person out now that Peter was gone. By this late in the trip, Day Eight of intense experiences and twenty-four hour living together there was

friction. But more positive feelings developed after this low. On the last day, Lynn led a final meeting that closed the trip on a high note.

Stay Together

Staying together as a group was also a strongly held social norm for the Wilderness Explorations members. The emphasis on staying together could be seen in the above comparison of the dinner meals on Day One and Day Ten. Other meals on the trip also indicated this growing pattern of staying together. The campsite was primarily a place to socialize.

Other examples of this norm in force were apparent. The planned solitude times were not especially liked, especially as the trip went on. During the hour of solitude on Day Four, many of the teens got together after a short time. On Day Six they argued against doing a short solo in the gathering darkness. One person suggested this was an opportunity to try new things but other teens argued that they wanted to spend more time together. On Day Nine I recorded the results of a second attempt to provide the teens with a solitude experience.

> After dinner, Lynn sent the teens off for 45 minutes to spend by themselves. But few took it as a solo experience--some went into the tents to rest or sleep. Several of the boys wandered off together to "look for girls." Early in the trip, Lynn used to say the meal prep time "was a good time to work on personal journals." She doesn't say that anymore.

The growing importance of staying with the group is demonstrated here. The remaining teens napped in their tents, except for two who kept wandering back into the campsite. A similar situation occurred during the individual reflection time before the final group meeting on the last day.

The group tacitly enforced staying close together on the trail and river also. During the first two days of the trip, the group had hiked separately or in twos and threes. Hiking up Assiniboine Pass, The group had split into three, then two, one, then three hikers. I observed another incident later that day.

> We started hiking down the hill off Assiniboine Pass. Lynn had said for all to hike together. Quickly they split into three groups. I walked with Peter at the end. "I thought Lynn said to stick close, looks like we're not," he remarked. (Fieldnotes, Day Two)

Compare the above entry from Day Two, with an example from an observation recorded on Day Four.

> During today's hike they never spread out as we'd done other days. Exception: if someone was slow to get up and start when the others left the rest break. Then the rear person would hurry to catch up. This is something we [leaders] encourage... saying, "catch up."

Another example of leaders contributing, albeit unconsciously, to the pressure to stay together occurred on the trail on Day Four.

> Bob was hanging back. Are you tired? I asked, as if there might be something wrong with hiking alone. He said no. He seemed to be watching the scenery or just wanted to hike more alone. He sped up when I asked if he was OK. (Fieldnotes, Day Four)

The pressure to stay with the group also occurred on the river. Here people were partnered, except for the lone kayak. The canoes never spread out of sight amidst the sweeps and curls of the river's course. While this may be an obvious safety procedure, the teens never pushed this limit; they seemed satisfied to stay close together. Only Mackenzie ever went far ahead and no one lagged back. Mackenzie had also hiked ahead once. Yet the others teased her greatly, such that when she paddled ahead while in the kayak she said "I don't know what was wrong with me."

Mackenzie was the only one who made a point to take personal time. In most cases, she did so early in the mornings before the others were up. When others began milling (and early in the trip she jolted them awake with wide-voiced singing) Mackenzie did not separate herself from the others. But part of her reason for arousing from her sleeping bag earlier than the rest of the group, she said, was the feeling "that I might miss something." A result of this pressure to stay together was a comment Danny made after the trip. He wished he'd had more opportunity for structured "thinking time." He implied this was something he would not take on his own and that he could not think or reflect on the experience when the group was present or interacting. Staying together was an important part of the group experience on the trip.

Help Each Other.

On the last day of the trip, Mackenzie shared the journal entry she had written in the half hour Lynn sent them out to reflect on the trip.

> Two weeks and seven brothers later I survived.... But surprisingly enough you made it easy--not that easy. We stuck together through and through. At times it was

> difficult, yelling across the valley, screaming across rapids. At other times it came naturally, helping grab coolers from floating away, setting up camp, washing others dishes... You've made this trip one I will always remember. Thank you.

Such was the tenor of comments made by the teens regarding the experience of being part of this group. The trip and group was challenging, but it was worthwhile. The group relations were marked by two themes: being together and helping each other helped make the trip fun. A secondary theme was to avoid rocking the boat.

Overall, the entire group got along quite well. There were few conflicts, no cliques and a lot of friendships. Quickly, they became comfortable with each other. In the rain on Day Three, they had jumped rope, played hokey-pokey and the "ring around the rosie," complete with appropriate movement. Helping each other have fun in this new world was important. The hike on Day Four was long and exhausting. We arrived at camp and had a massage circle. Play was an important part of the group.

Not only did the teens help each other have fun, they helped each other period. The SWC Director, who spent parts of two days with the group in the middle of the trip, commented on how the group seemed to be working together. Helping each other have fun also meant helping each other out. Helping each other set up tents, rescue gear, hike together, encourage each other up mountain slopes, belay[9] each other, assist the cooking and so on. Lynn wrapped up the trip by leading a discussion on when they had felt a sense of community. Mackenzie responded,

> I also thought that it was good that everyone helped out and stuff when Luke and I tipped. They didn't say, "No, we want to finish the rapids." They just went to get our boat and stuff and they ferried us across. So thanks everyone. (Fieldnotes, Day Twelve)

The teens were in a new, challenging circumstance. The group would help them 'keep it safe' both emotionally and physically.

The relations, however, grew only to a certain extent. Another tacit norm was not to rock the boat. Some conflicts arose, but were rarely resolved. More usually they went unacknowledged. For example,

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[9]Belaying is what the other person does to ensure safety while the climber ascends. The belayer takes up the slack in the rope and uses specific techniques to ensure the climber does not fall more than a very short distance if he or she should slip. The word comes from a French term meaning to "hold fast." I always tell people it is a reference to what would happen if the belayer is not doing the job right--the climber would "be laying" on the ground.

> Mackenzie was on the bank as we tried to unload the canoes. Her gear was still in the boat and they wouldn't let her get to it. They tried to throw her in the water, body blocked her to prevent access to the canoe and made anti-woman jokes. At one point she told them to "Fuck off." Then to Luke, "Cut it out. Quit egging them on." But I am not sure to what extent she was serious. They did not listen and the incident was never mentioned after. (Fieldnotes, Day Ten)

Mackenzie was sick of the teasing, however, the issue was not addressed and she only showed her frustration occasionally. Often it was play that created the difficulty, a quick squall that passed across the sun. Never large, these squalls stayed in the sky to occasionally reform.

> Bob and Danny had altercation in camp. Danny undid his tent poles with Bob still inside. Bob blew up and they shoved each other. Lynn separated them to other sides of camp for a cool down and left it at that. I asked Bob [later] and he said he was upset at the incident. He didn't think Danny was just playing and that Danny was going to mess with his gear. (Fieldnotes, Day Eleven)

When Peter chose to leave, few people said anything regarding his departure or status in the group. In addition, he was rarely mentioned during the remaining three days. This was another instance of not rocking the happy boat of the Wilderness Explorations trip. The onus was on keeping things fun, and avoid what might be too uncomfortable. The group represented the familiar home during the trip. The participants worked to help each other and help keep it fun.

The Trip is about Challenge

The notion of challenge is embedded in the very activities upon which the trip itinerary was based--backpacking, rock climbing, caving, whitewater canoeing. Such adventure pursuits, by definition, involve challenge or risk. The activities themselves were the primary draw of the trip for most of the participants. Besides the activities, physical discomfort and dealing with their fears were other challenges the teens described; no one felt the group provided a social challenge. Two related themes developed in the group: Challenge is good and challenge is by choice.

Challenge Is Good/Challenge By Choice

The importance of challenge is featured by its prominent role in the plot line in the stories which the teens told others. "How I had to deal with or overcome that---" is present

in most of the highlights participants recount. Not all highlights were ones in which challenges occurred, but the preponderance of this motif in the trip highlights conveys the significance the participants felt toward the challenge and sense of accomplishment they felt.

The very choice of each teen to participate in a program of this type indicates at least some desire for challenging physical activity in the outdoors. This was particularly evident in the rock climbing. The climbing was an exciting and anticipated segment of the trip for most of the participants. For the duration of the activity the participants maintained a high level of enthusiasm. The possible routes the climbers from which to choose enabled each to pick an appropriate challenge. Another contributing reason was that a sense of accomplishment was a result of succeeding. Gary's comment is illustrative.

> It was fun once you got up there, once you did the challenge you were doing. You each tried something different that you haven't tried before or something you have tried before. But it was still challenging. (Fieldnotes, Day Five)

Even in other activities mentioned as highlights, such as hiking Assiniboine Pass or rescuing a swamped canoe, these components of challenge and accomplishment were still present. Challenge was recognized as good by the participants. It was a valued part of the trip experience.

However, this theme was balanced by another group norm; as early as the pre-trip meetings Lynn established that challenge was by choice. No one was to be forced beyond their self-determined limits, she said, and the group concurred by their actions. This is an important norm because it legitimizes an individual's freedom to decline a particular challenge. Participants can be in discouraging or dangerous situations when trip leaders allow individuals to be in too much fear or discomfort.

Challenge by choice was clearly shown on the cave day. JJ and Danny decided they had had enough and decided it was time to stop. After discussing the situation as a group, four of the teens--nicknamed the "Expedition Crew"--pushed on to the cave mouth located near the mountaintop. The other four chose to wait at the stopping point. In the discussion support was provided for the ones who stayed back and no negative censure was suggested.

Challenge implies something that is hard. It also implies some success. Without some sort of accomplishment there was not a sense that a challenge had been met well. The four on the Expedition Crew considered this adventure a highlight of the entire trip. When asked why the expedition stuck out in her mind Mackenzie answered,

> [I was thinking] "Is the cave around the next corner. This is challenging, but I'm doing it." Well I wasn't going to give up. I was tired and I'd fallen down the mountain once. I felt really good on that. It was really good. It really was. A big sense of achievement. (Interview one)

Luke highlighted the aspects of risk, fear, accomplishment and setting that gave a synergistic power to the experience. Even half a year later, the Expedition Crew was a highlight for Luke.

> I can't get out of my mind when we were going to that cave. When we first put our helmets on and climbed up that little steep part where everyone was getting a iittle afraid and the wind was just blowing and blowing. That sticks, I can't get it out of my mind.... WOW! (Interview two)

Although both JJ and Danny had pushed themselves as hard toward their relative personal limits as the ones on the Expeditionary Crew, the hike towards the cave was not a highlight for them, nor for the other two who stayed below. After the trip Danny still felt a tinge of disappointment.

> Yeah, I wish I had gone further. Because after a while, when we wouldn't go up further, we were down on the rocks playing. I wish we would have waited a bit and then we could have gone further. But we didn't exactly know where the cave was so we didn't want to go up. I was kind of disappointed with that but at least I got up there. Partly up there. (Interview one)

The relationship between challenge, accomplishment, and the highlights the teens recalled indicates the importance of leaders ensuring that at least some of the experiences on wilderness programs are positive, successful ones. Challenge was good but challenge should be by choice, these teens established.

Challenging the Earth And Self

The importance attached to the physical challenges of adventure pursuits and the mediation of challenge by perceived accomplishment may influence the participants' perceptions and relationship with the natural world. The land may be relegated to the background, the stage upon which the activities occurs. Furthermore, the land might be seen as the adversary against which the participant might be testing him or herself. Severalelements related to the domain of challenge included fear, physical discomfort and

a "man against nature" notion.[10]

Competition with the Land

The competitive character of "Human against nature" has hints of domination, conquering and mastery. This notion was only mentioned on a very few occasions. It may be an underlying theme, however.

Only a few people used the word "conquer" in my presence. For example, JJ explained why he liked the backpack segment in the community meeting on Day Five.

> I thought I would hate [the backpacking segment] but I liked it... I thought we conquered Wonder Pass and Assiniboine Pass, which is good. I'd like to go back and conquer the rest of the trail--all hundred kilometres. I think we should go back, walk back there again. (Fieldnotes, Day Five)

On Day Six JJ described his rock climbing experience.

> I felt that we conquered something today. Going up that 150 foot [climb]. I looked down once and said, "I want to give up, I want to give up." Then I thought about it: "You know the feeling I would get if I got on top of this?... It was so great when we got on top of there. (Fieldnotes, Day Six)

Luke also used the expression of 'conquering.'

> I always wondered why people would hike up to Mt. Assiniboine. Like, what's there?... But now I realize why. And it's because of the feel of the accomplishment. Maybe the view and how you conquered that kind of thing. (Fieldnotes, Day Five)

In this talk about conquering hints at the feeling that they conquered the mountain/rock or conquered something inside themselves. Both also noted powerful instances of connection to the natural world and said they gained confidence and "grew" from the experiences on the trip.

Mackenzie expressed a sense of competing with nature in the same breath she described a sense of closeness to it.

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[10]I have intentionally used gender language. Many ecofeminists connect the adversarial relationship of human and nature with patriarchial domination of woman, nature and minorities. See C. Merchant (1980), The Death of Nature. For a discussion on how this attitude relates to the way western society conceptualizes landscapes, see "Pornotopia", a chapter in J.D. Porteous (1990) Landscapes of the Mind. The term "manmade" was frequently used by the teens. Although I have tended to use different terms, "manmade" has been retained in the text on occasion as I believe it reflects the members' views in a different way than does "humanmade."

I think that the harder I pushed, the more I felt close to nature. Cause it was the thing that was challenging me, so I was trying to beat it, in some way. Like I wasn't competing with the other people on the trip. I was competing with nature. So, I think that was really a big part of [feeling close to nature]. (Interview one)

Later in the first interview Mackenzie returned to this notion. "When you're competing and stuff you don't really notice anything else. You're just, 'I gotta do this, I gotta do this, I gotta do this.' And that's why I do sports." She continued by discussing the Expedition Crew and the challenge experienced on that occasion. Attention was more keen and, at times, a feeling of closeness to nature developed through the intensity of the emotions and experience in the challenges.

A number of teens commented that they felt they had grown through the activities on the trip they found challenging. JJ and Gary commented in casual conversation after the rock climbing that it would help them increase self-confidence. Mackenzie said past trips over her long involvement with SWC had caused this to occur. Luke felt this had happened on the previous SWC trip in which he had participated. JJ was "surprised" he'd survived and liked the backpacking, and felt this would help him be less nervous about new experiences in the future. Both Kenneth and Bob did not believe the trip had "changed" them. However, Kenneth felt a sense of accomplishment that "he survived" and "did it all the way."

There was a sense of testing themselves against the difficulty of the hill to Assiniboine Pass or the challenge for the "Expedition Crew" to scramble the steep scree slopes of Wapiabi Mountain. Except as noted above, none of the participants expressed this challenge in terms of competing against the earth. The challenge was with self; this seemed the case even when it was the geographical features, such as Assiniboine Pass, that provided the challenge. For example, Gary commented on why the experiences were so good. '"Cause like rock climbing you had to challenge yourself to rappel down and climb back up. Paddling you have to challenge yourself to take the big waves." The test was against an existing challenge; the natural world seems to be seen in static terms,

Gary said he would tell others the trip was "tough but awesome." Kenneth said other people probably thought he was crazy for going on the trip.

RBD: Most people don't find it fun.

KENNETH: Gruelling, challenging and enjoyable.

RBD: And most people look at the two of us and say, "Those don't fit together. It's gruelling and you enjoy it?"

KENNETH: Because when you finish, you're glad that you did, glad that I carried everything, hiked 52 kilometres, had an altitude change of two kilometres... I can say I did this.

RBD: You have a sense of pride it sounds like.

KENNETH: Un-huh. Because I did it... Totally. (Interview one)

It is possible that, even if the challenge is considerable, that the participants may still have a positive feeling towards the wilderness setting.

On the other hand, several incidents seem to hint at attitudes of human superiority. One day as we ate dinner during the backpack segment JJ and Danny discussed blowing up seagulls by somehow feeding them Drano. Another day, Osprey talked with the teens on top of the climbing cliff.

> The teens are talking about bugs and smashing them as we wait up top. Osprey tells them there are more bugs on the hillside than humans on earth. JJ, Danny, Gary say how bad they are and that humans are the master race. Osprey says we might want to be careful thinking that. Tells them about army ants and termites and jokes that they might take over. (Fieldnotes, Day Six)

On Day Ten, I recorded in fieldnotes,

> We stopped at an island for a pee break. On the rounded river stones we found a dying dragonfly. JJ, Danny, Bob and Gary began playing catch with it and throwing it up in the air to watch it crash. Lynn, Luke and Mackenzie were disgusted. Kenneth watched with his typical equanimity.

These incidents show a certain brutality and human-over-nature attitude. But they do not show a certain trend as examples of more cooperative or compassionate attention to litter, animals, trees and other elements of the natural world have been pointed out elsewhere.

The Challenge of Physical Discomfort

Another way for participants on a wilderness trip to be challenged is by physical discomfort. Climbing, backpacking and canoeing are physically strenuous activities to people who have not been participating regularly in them. All the teens (and leaders!) noticed fatigue and soreness during the trip. In addition, a few late nights contributed to the tiredness. The day hailed and rained hard on us one morning high in the mountains. It drizzled a few other days while we were on the river. Therefore, people got wet to various degrees. Since the temperature varied from day to day, some people were also chilled at times. In addition individuals mentioned heavy packs, sleeping cold (some sleeping bags were very thin),

headaches from not drinking enough water, scraped hands from climbing, sick stomachs from eating too much cheesecake one night and similar examples of physical discomfort.

JJ often made complaints about sleeping cold, the effort or other circumstances. During the evening meeting on Day Ten he said, "I'm looking forward to going home because... my bed! I'm sick of sleeping on rocks. I haven't had a ground pad [for insulation from the ground] the whole time." The other teens pointed out it was his fault for not bringing this thin foam pad, which had been on the equipment list. For all his complaints, JJ also frequently reminded us how much he liked the activities, the natural world and the trip in general.

For the most part, this physical discomfort seemed to be taken in stride. Individuals also enjoyed waterfights in the water, soaking in the hot sun after the hail, playing hokey-pokey in the rain, a comfortable breeze, swimming in the glacier-fed Marvel Lake and many other moments. The teens seemed to expect that one will not be entirely comfortable nor uncomfortable on a wilderness trip. "You just deal with it" said one. Luke made a comment which also seems to indicate this. "I'm OK with being wet. It's being damp I don't like." The level and continuance of discomfort is one of the biggest differences the teens noticed between being in a natural setting and home.

Insects were another expected discomfort. Several teens occasionally put on insect repellent. For example, on Day Five I recorded,

> They set up tarps [rather than tents]. "I'm sleeping outside" is a big cry. Bob was going to do it until he thought about mosquitoes... They put a mosquito coil Luke found on the ground under the tarp and will go to sleep with mosquito repellent. Danny says he is only putting repellent near his ears. I have hardly seen a skeeter at all.

I wondered if these teens put on the repellent because they expected insects as part of the package of being in a natural setting. This incident may show a desire to control this element or to avoid a potentially present perceived annoyance.

Numerous times individuals commented that they wanted conveniences of home to make this experience easier. On the morning of Day Nine, as I was cutting the empty half of an egg carton to make room in the cooler, another cook noticed my action.

DANNY: Are you making ice?

RBD: No but I guess you could.

DANNY: Oh, but you'd need a refrigerator. I keep forgetting that we don't have one.

RBD: Really? You forgot?

DANNY: (with sincerity) Yeah. (Fieldnotes, Day Nine)

I have no doubt Danny said this with a genuine feeling. It may simply be that his backcountry circumstances momentarily slipped his mind. In any case it indicates how such familiar items are taken-for-granted.

Danny commented that he did not like the slow pace of walking and would prefer the van. JJ summed up this point of view, "You want it to be longer out in the bush but you want to have the van with you. In case you get tired or something. So you can just hop in the van and keep going."

On Day Eleven we had canoed all day in damp weather and big waves that soaked the canoeists. Gary commented with a shake of his head, "I'd like this a lot if we could blast down the rapids and paddle the river real fast and go home. [Go to a] warm house, shower, dry clothes, not just a tent." Kenneth also was glad about certain things at home,

> I'm glad I have the house that is heated because it wasn't that cold on the trip but if it had been everybody would have been freezing... It's nice to instantly dry out clothes, I have lots of extras [at home]. It means everything doesn't get soaked. That was a good part of coming back. Being dry. Not having to worry about being wet again. (Interview one)

Similarly, the van was a place in which they could control the environment. On the trip Gary said, "You can make it warm if you want it or cold if you want it." As we drove down the Spray Lakes Road after the backpack segment we alternated between having the windows open and putting on the air conditioner. Someone even asked for the heater to take chill away after a period of extended AC refrigeration. After the trip, Danny reflected that getting to the van was like, "Kind of a relief. You could sit down in a comfortable seat. The sense that you're getting somewhere fast again. Music, we hadn't heard that in a long time. Stuff like that." Peter commented on getting to the van and "comfortable seats" after a day's worth of activity. When asked if he was not comfortable sitting on the ground or picnic tables, he replied, "Oh I was comfortable. In the sense of emotionally but I [liked the physical comfort of] a cushy seat."

Lynn thought that the teens gained an increased level of comfort in the wilderness setting. JJ, Gary and Luke all remarked that they got more used to sleeping on the ground. As the trip wore on more people slept in the tarp or outside than they had at the start. Mackenzie mentioned that early in the trip she had really wanted a shower. "But after a while you get used to it. You don't notice it anymore." Peter had made a similar remark. JJ commented after the trip that he wanted to go on another trip. "It would be better now

because I'm not worried about nothing or nobody and I know what I'm doing now." We will return to this increased comfort level later. Some level of physical discomfort seemed to have been accepted by the teens as an expected component of a wilderness trip.

The Challenge of Fear

Fear was felt by the participants in a number of different ways. It too is a type of discomfort and dealing with fear was another challenge the participants mentioned. The most obvious example of this fear and challenge was in the hike to the cave when JJ and Danny eventually could go no further along the steep, rocky trail. JJ was also nervous about bears and interrupted several evening meetings with his nervousness. The darkness contributed. He refused to do one solitude experience because it was dark. Peter's fear of heights limited the amount and enjoyment of rappelling and climbing he did. Although group norms established challenging oneself as good, they also reinforced challenge by personal choice.

In most of the above fears the individual worked to deal with the fear. Again, an increasing comfort level was evident as familiarity served to cause the fears to wane. Danny said he realized now he could have gone further up the mountain toward the cave. JJ went camping with his family a week after the trip and had a bear in his camp. JJ said he felt a sense of closeness with the natural world at times. He explained what he thought kept that feeling away at other times: "Too scared of animals in the woods, or scared of falling out of the canoe and banging my knees on the rocks." Mackenzie had said she felt a closeness to the natural world when sleeping outside, then made an exception of the night she had been disturbed by rustling in the bush near her bedroll.

Overall on this trip, no one felt the challenge was too difficult. Even JJ and Danny, who had to quit the hike to the cave, were emphatic in a desire to return and do more backcountry trips. Challenge was established by the group as a good thing, one to be done by choice. Discomfort and fear did not appear to be too great for the participants, although hints are present that these two elements may hinder a positive feeling about the wilderness setting. Too uncomfortable or too challenging may 'turn people off' or lead them to decide nature is bad. In the end, however, challenge was a very personal and individual thing. It was also one of the most important elements in the trip experience.

Attention to the Natural World

I have alluded already to another cultural theme related to the experience of the natural world. As a tacit norm the teens operated under an assumption that deliberate

attention to the natural world was 'odd' behaviour and not normal. The group lived in the wilderness setting and had to get used to it, but did not closely observe it.

While this standard was never vocalized, it was expressed in a number of ways. Comments were made to draw attention to those who made a point to take more than ordinary notice of their surroundings. I have already referred to my observation that fewer incidents of participants directly attending to the natural world occurred as the trip went on and the social experience predominated. This occurred even though all the teens said they valued the natural setting.

When JJ chased a deer to observe and take pictures, they teased him for days. I was called "Nature Boy," especially by JJ, because of my frequent comments about nature and natural history facts.[11] The teens were astonished that several travellers we met would come all the way from England or California; they wondered why foreigners saw the Banff mountains as among the most beautiful spots on earth, much less travel that distance. Finally, garbage sweeps were forgotten. Although she emphasized the teen responsibility for their trip, Lynn often ended up doing the sweep. "I have trouble asking them to do things," she told me.

> On some mornings the teens remembered the litter sweep.
>
> The morning meeting began to break up after Lynn explained the day's river conditions. Kenneth reminded the group of the need to do a garbage sweep. Danny found his shorts on a tree. All except JJ were cleaning up, walking back and forth, eyes cast toward the ground. Danny noticed Kenneth and his handful of litter and asked "How come you get all the garbage?" With a slight sarcastic edge, Kenneth said, "because I can see it." (Fieldnotes, Day Eleven)

Even in this example, the group norm of nature appreciation as an irregular behaviour is reinforced by Danny's comment. In a similar vein, on Day Four we had held a garbage competition. JJ had picked up far more than anyone else including fishing line, grills, and litter galore. I complimented him and walked away. But Danny again reinforced the notion that too much attention to the natural world was not normal behaviour, as I overheard and recorded.

RBD: "You've done a service to the earth; the earth appreciates it."

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[11]For reasons never investigated, Lynn did not receive such a nickname although all the teens knew she too was keenly interested in nature. Perhaps I made more comments or 'teachable moments.' They teased the two of us in different ways--I seemed to get a number of nicknames. Lynn already had her "Summer Wind" nickname.

JJ (to Danny): I was thinking about that some."

DANNY: "What?"

JJ: "That the earth gives us a lot. It feels good to give back to it."

DANNY (sarcastically): "So you're going to pick up trash at home?" (Fieldnotes, Day Four)

Danny said later that he thought about JJ's comment a few times in the trip. Otherwise, the subject was not brought up again and JJ did not make similar comments again on the trip. He brushed the subject aside in the interviews.

Observation–Exploring With All The Senses

This section covers the observations participants made of the natural world while on the trip or the way they commented on the observation, beauty or views in the later interviews. It refers to the times in which they took particular notice of the objects or scenes around them.

Most of the teens had their moments when they found something neat. Whether it was toads hopping on the side of the trail, or chasing deer to get a good photo, wildlife seemed to attract the most attention. Bob said he felt a closeness to nature "seeing all those animals go by" and Gary said "I don't really like the city.... Not as much wildlife." JJ, Luke and Danny also commented on the wildlife. Intriguingly, except for those two incidents and birds along the river we did not see other wildlife. More could be seen in a slough adjacent to a farmer's field near Sherwood Park. We did use the bear hang while in the mountains each of the first four nights. Perhaps the simple expectation was present that we were in a place where animals lived.

Mackenzie and Luke would ask occasional questions about ecological processes, like 'what lives in the lake' or 'how this valley formed.' Kenneth tended to observe more and listen frequently when I was explaining something to another person. For example, on Day Four I wrote, "As we hiked down from Wonder Pass, Gary needed to fix his shoe. At this spot, while Kenneth gazed intently at a waterfall, others watched Gary or talked with each other." For Kenneth, nature was "the main thing" and reason he came on the trip. At another time I wrote about Bob, "Along the hike down, lots of views. They saw a falcon. Bob asked if the pointy wings were a falcon or an eagle? (Shows that he's observing.) They took pictures of the view. (Fieldnotes, Day Four)" Bob also identified black poplars and other trees for me as we canoed together. Gary noticed that a forest fire had passed through one spot. But for the most part these observations of the "little things" were sporadic, especially later in the trip.

A characteristic of most of the instances where people took particular notice of the natural world was that the occasions were solitary experiences or occurred with only another person or two. As the group experience increased, such recorded observations grew fewer. Mackenzie had mentioned how much she had liked hiking by herself. It gave her the opportunity to look around and observe her surroundings. But while kayaking days later she got far ahead of the other boats. In a later interview she never mentioned this as a chance to look around and even said "I don't know what was wrong with me" as if being alone was aberrant. She had been teased quite a bit about hiking ahead of the rest on Day Five.

That same day, Day Four, Kenneth, Peter, Bob, Lynn and I found some blueberries at the side of the trail. We stopped, ate a bit. But the rest kept going and we hurried on. Peter said as we caught up, "Some people are in a hurry to get there. I like to stop and watch." At the morning meeting earlier that day I had said the day's theme would be "Enjoy nature and watch it as you go by." He went by himself to look at the fog rising from Lake Magog in the morning. But after the trip, he said nature was "nice" and not much else.

Several themes overlap in these examples. Deliberate appreciation of nature was not supported as normal by the group. As the group waxed, attention to nature waned. And attention to nature tended to take place when not with the entire group. These observations suggest investigation of the solitude opportunities.

Solitude--Opportunity for Attention.

On Day Three we had kept camp in the same place near Lake Magog cradled at the foot of Matterhorn-lookalike Mount Assiniboine. In the late afternoon, as a planned program activity, Lynn sent all the teens to take an hour by themselves around the shore of the lake. Impressions of the solitude after the trip was mixed. Nearly all said it was "OK" or "good." In essence, by taking away the people, it gave a structured time to slow down and observe. JJ said he felt closest to the natural world during this first solitude, "You could just sit around and look at everything. Just sitting there thinking about how it came to be like this." While a couple of the other boys got together for the last twenty minutes, he wandered off from them. As JJ described it,

> We had our fifteen, twenty minutes of solitude, then we got into a big group and went somewhere. I just stayed by myself and walked up the river. Found a place to sit. There was a big stool in the middle of the river. I didn't know what to think about that. What's a stool doing here in the middle of the river?" (Interview one)

Gary and Bob skipped rocks near each other for much of the time. But Mackenzie stayed apart, as did Kenneth. He almost sounded surprised when he said in the first interview that he had liked it. A few of the teens wrote in journals they had brought on the trip. Peter said he "looked at things... just nature." Several said they would have liked to do more of it.

RBD: How come?

DANNY: More time to think.

RBD: That's important to you? How come.

DANNY: I like sitting down and thinking about stuff. you never get to during the day--you're always thinking about other stuff and what comes next, what am I doing.

RBD: So it's nice to have a structured time?

DANNY: Yeah.

In this except from the second interview Danny was a little more enthusiastic about the solitude than he had been before. But even after the experience, he said "It was kinda neat--you get to think, look around, see things you haven't seen before." Luke also suggested we should have done more. In the second interview he commented,

> I really like that being by yourself. When we went out and sat by ourselves for a long time. I just really like that. I didn't mind siting around. I could do that for a long time, just sitting there, being by myself. Hearing the sounds of nature, that really stuck.

But at the time Luke had gotten together with several other boys. Certainly he did not express anything so positive immediately after the experience, although did he try to get the group to do another solo experience on an evening three days later. On that occasion it got dark so the solo did not occur. Indeed, most of the teens argued strenuously against it. One of the arguments was that they wanted to hang out together and get to know each other more.

Another solitude opportunity was planned for after dinner on Day Nine. By this time in the trip, the emphasis was on the social experience. Most of the teens either took naps or walked together in groups. We shall return to these experiences in a later section on "Connectedness to Nature." These opportunities could be a powerful encounter with surroundings or oneself or both, for the ones who took the opportunity to be alone. The attraction to the group, therefore, was a way of avoiding observation of the natural world and reflection on self.

Attention to the View

For the most part observations of the "little things" were sporadic, especially later in the trip. Otherwise, it took spectacular sights to capture attention. Mackenzie commented on this after the trip.

> Like a wildflower, well, that's really nice. But you never really see that sort of stuff where we come from. You don't go and you don't see all these mountains and lakes and trees everywhere.... It's just not something you see everyday. A wild flower, well, that's really pretty and everything, but whoopie.

Marvel Lake is the clearest example of the power of the big views on the trip. We crested a small ridge near lunch on Day Four and "caught a wonderful view of Marvel Lake. There was a simultaneous expulsion of 'WOW!' from several people. 'Kodak moment,' said someone. 'Take a picture and make a postcard. You could make a million,' piped Bob." (Fieldnotes, Day Four)

JJ described it thus,

> I remember... the big mountain where the lake was on the bottom. Remember when the mountain was up top and the lake was on the bottom when we were up top on the opposite hill? By Wonder Pass. And the mountains were out behind us.

We decided to stop for lunch right there and spent almost two hours watching a marmot and the view, and playing in the bushes. Several mentioned later that the view of Marvel Lake was a highlight. As we sat there, JJ and I talked about the lake and the potential for a road built in there. I described his reaction in fieldnotes: "He expressed 'Ugh!' and that it would get trash thrown on the side of the road like all the others and would get really used, losing its natural look."

On another occasion the Expedition Crew topped a ridge and had a magnificent view of the east slope of the Rockies. Kenneth commented in the first interview, that this was one of the moments he felt particularly connected to the natural world. "When we were doing the cave thing. We climbed up there and there was nothing [around for miles]... I want to do it again. I liked that, just looking over... " He stammered, lost for words, but still conveyed the awestruck impression he felt. Nor did Luke have words to describe the feeling of connection to the natural world he had experienced at such times. "Oh definitely! Just walking up, scrambling that [peak], just looking around. That feeling came back. It's an incredible feeling. It's just like, something right inside wants to come out. I've felt like that for awhile but its really boosted up in the last little while." (Interview two) These instances of spectacular views commanded attention in a way that smaller observation did not.

The Smell of Nature

Sight was not the only sense through which the teens observed the natural world. Sound has already been mentioned. Smell was mentioned even more often, especially after the trip. According to Porteous (1990), odour can convey memories even long afterwards; smell can really only be transmitted by experience. Hanging around the campfire one night took Luke to the past.

> You know what's a good smell? Fires... when you smell it you think of camps and stuff... Like jamborees. I was in Scouts for a long time. I remember I was at this party and they had a fire and one of these guys who was in scouts with me said, "what does that remind you of?" Scouts!(Fieldnotes, Day Eight)

Several of the teens remembered parts of the trip during the interviews and compared it to home.

> RBD: What's not relaxing about here [Sherwood Park]?
>
> JJ: The air just smells different like you can smell all the exhaust and down there its just the pine trees and the horse shit and all that stuff. And when you come back here its like gravel and cigarette butts and--. (Interview one)

Gary referred to the forest, in explaining why he liked more natural settings better than his home.

> GARY: But different kind of trees [on the trip than on his acreage]. It's better.
>
> RBD: Why better?
>
> GARY: Because it smells like trees. It doesn't at home. (Interview one)

Apparently, smell could bring close attention to the actual experience and re-experiencing of the trip. This was especially true in Kenneth's case after a few days sweating in his boots. "It's more fun doing [things] in the outdoors. You notice that you're doing it. Like, oh, it smells different when I'm tying these [shoes] today. It's not the usual routine."

Observation of the natural world was done more in small groups or alone than in the large group. Although the group established subtle pressure to maintain close attention to the natural world as a less than normal part of the experience, the natural world was still part of the motivation to participate in the wilderness trip. And some parts of the natural world still had the potential to draw attention away from the group. This was most evident in the "wow" incidents like Marvel Lake and the expansive view the Expedition crew had from the mountainside of foothills stretching eastward until blurry in the prairie haze.

Lynn tried to counteract this group norm by drawing attention to geological features and other natural processes and by trying to provide solitude opportunities. Still, the teens

limited their interaction directly with the natural world. It was mediated through the group experience and acceptable in this context, as if the group legitimized exploration of the natural world.

Segmentation Of The Trip

An example of the overall program de-emphasizing the experience of the natural was the segmentation of the trip. Individuals mentioned that they were looking forward to other segments while still on a previous one. Kenneth was one participant who indicated thinking ahead weakened attention to the here and now. The segmentation of the trip into the four activity types was a function of time and program. Moving from backpack to rock climbing to caving to river with travel in the van between each segment kept the trip from being a continuous experience of wilderness exploration. This discontinuity was referred to on the second day of the river segment,

> Luke says his legs are still sore from the Expedition (to find the cave on Day Eight).
> LYNN: That seems like such a long time ago.
> MACKENZIE: I know! This seems like a totally different trip.
> LYNN: Seems like we left and came back to do a river trip.
> GARY: Year. (Fieldnotes, Day Ten)

In the interviews following the trip individuals recognized the need for reorientation to a wilderness explorations mode after travelling in the van.

> RBD: You say the natural setting was important--what parts of the trip hindered your appreciation of it?
> KENNETH: Mainly travelling in the van between places. (Interview one)

> RBD: I asked you if there was ever a time that you felt really close to it [nature]. Was there ever a time when you felt really separated from it?
> MACKENZIE: Um, in the van. Well in the van and Canmore and Rocky Mountain House. But I think those are kind of natural things to feel that you're kind of separated from it because you are right in there, in civilization and stuff. There's like, not a tree in sight. (Interview one)

> RBD: What was it like seeing the van? Like at the end of the hiking trip?...
> JJ: Like it was over. And you didn't want it to be over. Wanted it to last longer. (Interview one)

The segmentation caused a multiple reenactment of what outdoor leaders fondly call the "Barndoor Syndrome"--at the end of a trip participants, like horses smelling the fresh alfalfa of the barn and the chance to get the weight off their backs, rush towards the end. This occurred several times on this trip. Lynn tried to minimize the segmentation when talking to Danny on Day Five. "We went into the backcountry, now we're going into another adventure." The segmentation may have encouraged a lack of attention to the places through which the trip travelled. Kenneth said that even on one segment he was thinking ahead to later activities, particularly since he had never gone on a canoe trip before.

Travel in a van, with music, through towns, kept the trip from being a continuous experience of the natural in their minds. And different segments had a different feel of nature. However, although this segmentation of the trip caused some need for reorientation, the trip was also seen as a unified experience, the travel component being part of the whole experience. This was particularly true months later. Still, the segmentation of the trip contributed to the experience feeling like a series of adventures for the youth. The natural world tended to become the backdrop for "teens interacting with teens in the wilderness," as Mackenzie put it.

Further Examples of the Themes in Action

As we shall see more completely in the next chapter, one of the characteristics the teens ascribed to nature was that it was unfamiliar. Although one group theme was that the natural world was not something to pay close attention to, since the natural world was the setting for the trip, it was still something that had to be dealt with in the experience. I have argued that the organizing domain of the trip experience was to balance the pulls of exploring the unfamiliar and maintaining the familiar. In this section, specific places, actions and routines will be considered as the knowledge-in-action of the group members is used to manage their experience in the unfamiliar world of nature.

Places

With an understanding of the social themes we can look at the different places in the daily routine of the trip. The campsite, trail or river, and van, had different roles in the experience. Except for the nights of Day Five and Six, we moved camp every night. Therefore, the campsite and the travel were different places with a distinct set of associated activities. Within the travel component, the trail/river and van were also differentiated. Figure 4 diagrams these places of interaction.

Figure 4. A diagrammatic representation of the places of interaction. Campsite, kitchen, tenting area, trail or river, van, 'nature' and 'civilization' are represented. See text for complete explanation.

Campsite

The campsites served a purpose as a place for continuous social interaction among the group. The campsites were a place to sleep, cook, eat, play games, have evening meeting, unpack, set up the tents, hang-out, joke, converse. From this list it is clear that the campsites were the place to do what one might term the routine things of life, and as well as a place to interact with other group members. Certainly it was more a place of comfort than a place of exploring. Within the campsite are several specific areas. The kitchen is the place where socializing occurred.

Probably the most significant action that occurred at the campsite was the meal preparation and eating. The meal became the big social time.

> MACKENZIE: Yeah, like the meal when we camped beside the bridge was good... And that was fun. Cause like JJ came and Kenneth and I were doing it. And so that was good... Everyone was in a good mood and we were all joking and stuff. It was just a happy-go-lucky time. (Interview one)

The kitchen area of the campsite was where the teens would talk most about home.

The sleeping area--tents and tarp--were where deep conversation occurred. I was not privy to this area, choosing to leave a space for them to have on their own. Often the teens would talk late into the night. As they went to bed in the darkness the tent was the place where the teens would tell sketchy jokes and talk about subjects not appropriate for the whole group or the light to share. Three of the boys lit off a firecracker once. The campsites were rarely associated with the feeling of relaxation. They tended to be busy, social places.

As the trip progressed the group experience became more important with a consequent decline in individuals taking personal time or wandering away from the campsite. By the canoeing segment, individuals rarely left the campsite. Furthermore, they did not even scoot off into the brush on the margins. The exception was the campsite at the end of the river on Day Eleven. Here, several teens went off to find girls, the shower house, TV room or other people to talk with. The campsite was safe, a home away from home to hang around. Outside the campground was the place to explore, if they chose. The campsite was

like an island amidst unfamiliar nature. The exceptions to this were the days when the surroundings were more like familiar developed places, like Day Eleven.

For this reason, in Figure 4, the margins on the campsite are dark bounded and solid. A person had to make particular effort to leave the bounds of the campsite to go into nature. The kitchen and tenting area are distinct sites, and the teens stay close together.

Trail And River

The social interaction of the campsite, and especially the meals, is in contrast to the interaction on the trail or river. These were a place for getting somewhere, challenging oneself, thinking (sometimes), talking with one or two others, eating a meal that needed no cooking, and looking at nature. Clearly, action is more significant here. At the same time, the trail and river were more self-reflective sites. Whereas the campsite had been nearly exclusively inter-personal, because the participants had to travel single file or in boats opportunities for social interaction were limited. The trail and river were more encompassing of all the relations of an individual--including self, others in a limited fashion, and the place through which the person travelled. And since the campsite was not a place to experience nature, especially later in the trip, it's contrast with trail and river was sharper in this regard. A trail or a river has a magnetism drawing one to discover what is around the next bend.

'Getting somewhere' was important to the participants while on the trail. Time passing can be measured alongside travel--rivers and trails are also linear. Some of this attitude was motivated by a desire to get the weight of the pack off the back for the day. From my fieldnotes on Day Four,

> We took a lengthy break in the shaded forest after the long exposed walk high above the lake in the sun. People broke out snacks. Finally, after some giddiness in the group, Luke tried to motivate them to get going. Mackenzie pitched in: "Let's just get there and get it over with."

Paddling a river is even more a solitary experience than hiking as a group staying together, unless the canoes raft together which they only did on the last day. The canoe segment did allow more time to reflect and observe, although the teens also saw the risk as higher on the river and the rain on a couple of days increased discomfort.

The teens were mixed in how they perceived the trail or river. For most, the trail was a necessary item. But they did not feel it was part of nature. Rather, it was a thread of development snaking through nature.

LUKE: I don't know if I answered it when you asked that one question "When do you think you're in the backcountry?" When there's one little path... Like I remember I walked off the path for some reason. I think we were throwing water bottles or something. And I walked off the path and I thought, "no one on this earth has ever come here." Like, you're not supposed to go off the trail so what are the chances of someone else being in the same spot. That really stuck to me... Wow! (Interview two)

Persons on the trail or river are observers. The trail became a place upon which they stood and looked into the forest rather than being a part of, or even in, the forest. In a sense, the trail and river serve to bridge the explore/familiar sides of the experience. Kenneth talked of the trail being more like nature when it was thinner and bushes overhung. We never went off trail, but it would have been interesting to compare the experience of actually travelling within the forest. When I suggested travelling cross-country, the idea was rejected for fear of getting lost. As we shall see in the next chapter, trees and forest are symbolic of unfamiliar nature.

Therefore, in Figure 4, the trail is dashed, rather than a solid line, indicating that a walker can still interact with the natural world from the trail. The teens are spread out a little more.

Van

The van was another mode of transportation. Even more so, it was a place of interaction since we spent several hours driving on each of a number of days. In addition, it parked next to us for five nights, making a distinct contrast to the six nights on the backpack and canoe segments where we were carrying all our equipment. The van was a place for music, speedy travel, talking, having control over the heat, sitting down, junk food, going into the towns, experiencing 'civilization.' Objects not experienced at other times on the trip were significant, as well as the opportunity to socialize with the others in ways very reminiscent of home. The van was a return, for a short while, to their familiar reality.

The teens liked the van, in part, because it was an opportunity to control one's environment. "You can make it warm if you want it or cold if you want it," said Gary on the trip. "I want to sit in a real seat," declared Peter the same day. After the backpack segment the van was a place for JJ to sit and powder his tired feet. In the first interview, Gary remembered it as place of warmth with floors and music. Danny recalled seeing the van at the end of the backpacking. "Kinda a relief. You could sit down in a comfortable seat. The sense that you're getting somewhere fast again. Music, we hadn't heard that in a long time.

Stuff like that." JJ noted that it was "where you could sit down on something soft, without it being wet." The van was a well-known part of their familiar lives, a comfortable retreat from the ever-present novelty and challenge of the outdoor pursuits.

While some found the van a distraction, others seemed to consider it an acceptable tradeoff for having the variety of activities. The segmentation of the trip has already been addressed. JJ said he did not have mixed feelings about the van, "It was usually the place to rest, just relax and wait for the next adventure to come along." Peter suggested that,

> It seemed like when you'd go to the van it was a new part of the trip. A different style of the trip. we were hiking, then we were rappelling. Seemed like every time we went into the van it was on to something different. (Interview two)

In addition, the van drew the teens out of the wilderness explorations mindset. The teens called the van "civilization," which we shall see in the next chapter is the antithesis of 'nature.' Luke said "The van was kind of like home. You know, back to reality... you roll in and who cares?... Now I can relax and I don't have to worry so much about if it's going to rain right away." Mackenzie and Kenneth said that thinking about the van hindered their sensation of the natural world.

On one level the van was a necessary vehicle to participate in the various segments of the trip. On the other hand, it was an intrusion to some since the overall trip experience changed so dramatically upon re-encountering the van from a backcountry setting. Those focused on the activities, such as Bob and Gary, did not mind the van as much as those focused on the experience of the natural, such as Mackenzie and Kenneth. Not only was it a source of travel, the van helped draw the participants into a different mindset than that of the backcountry. Furthermore, the van connected disparate places and had the effect of shrinking space.

In Figure 4, the van is located at the end of the trail. It is attached to a picture of the city because of its association with civilization. The world of nature surrounds all of these places, the potential for exploring or interacting with it is represented by the border solidity.

Time And Scheduling

Veteran outdoor leaders often believe that one of the benefits of wilderness programs is the experience of natural rhythms. In addition to having to deal with inclement weather and other elemental factors which in a wilderness environment are uncontrollable and may necessitate changes of itinerary, the diurnal cycle wields a considerable influence. It has a far different cycle than what is often described as urban or clock time. To experience this

more directly all the participants were asked to leave watches in the van when we began the backpacking portion. Only Lynn was to take one.

Participants were mixed on benefit of being watchless. After the group had left the mountains, on Day Five, they talked about watches at the community meeting.

GARY: Are we allowed watches now?

LYNN: What do you think?

GARY: Year.

JJ: I think we should rough it without watches.

DANNY: I don't.

GARY: Just one person, or two people should have watches. (Someone in background said "3 or 4.") People that are more likely to get up early.

LUKE: I think the leader should have a watch.

LYNN: Just the leader of the day have a watch?

JJ: That's a good idea actually. We should try that.

Unfortunately for both educational and research value, the group never talked about the experience of being watchless beyond this brief exchange. I noticed that many of the participants wore watches the rest of the trip.

For most of the youth the lack of watches was not a big issue. Bob objected to taking his off, saying "It's a habit," but eventually complied. A couple of others may have left watches in their packs rather than the van. Luke mentioned that they would look at the watch hidden in his pack in the morning to "see if it was time to get up yet."

After the trip the teens were divided in their reactions to the lack of watches on the backpacking segment. Gary said "[It] didn't affect me. I never wear a watch." JJ commented "I never have a watch. I never knew the time." On the other hand, Kenneth did not like the feeling.

KENNETH: I didn't like that. I always look at my watch. It's a habit. Every few minutes I look at my watch. Just have to know the time! Why? Up, because it's something I do...

RBD: Danny you find yourself looking at it a lot and--.

KENNETH: For the first couple of days I did. Then I'd remember that I didn't have it on. Then I put it on when hiking and caving and looked at it whenever I wanted to... Felt good to have it on again. (Interview one)

Danny walked a careful line between the two points of view.

DANNY: Makes you wonder. You wonder what time it is, wonder what time it is when you're going to bed... It wasn't bad actually... kind of different.

RBD: Do you wear a watch much when you're around here?

DANNY: I never wear a watch. There's always clocks. And usually people who have watches.

RBD: So there's always chance for you to find out what time it is?

DANNY: Year.

RBD: Did you think about it much on the backpacking trip?

DANNY: Sometimes when we were walking I wondered what time it was--if we were on course, on schedule and stuff. (Interview one)

Even without watches clock time was still a reference point in scheduling activities and routines. For example,

> We then talked about when to start the day. Our climbing instructor will be ready [with the climbs set up] at 9:00... [After discussion of 8:00 and other times] Decision--cook group will get up at 7:30. (Fieldnotes, Day Five)

As this exchange shows, clock time was a frequent reference point. In this instance, our instructor, Osprey, was a private contractor hired to teach climbing for a certain number of hours. This had been mentioned earlier in the meeting. In the end, he went past his scheduled hours, making an offhand remark that their experience was more important than scheduled hours. But the scheduling through clock time reference to clock time was a common occurrence and not necessarily related to the diurnal cycle. For example, one day I recorded, "Danny noticed that it was 12:50. 'Let's eat lunch, it's lunchtime.' But few have watches. We stopped a couple of hours later, around 2:30ish. Note how the clock's presence can dictate but doesn't have to. "(Fieldnotes, Day Ten)

But clock time was not the only factor in scheduling events.

> Kenneth looks at his watch. "7:30 and we're still cooking supper. When I go home and have to eat at normal times I won't be able to stand it." We have eaten very late and in the dark most days. They did not have watches and did not seem to hurry. They talk about the watches now. Several of them thought it was kind of neat not to have them. (Fieldnotes, Day Six)

Clock time is an addition from home, as Kenneth noted. Furthermore, he intimates that there is a proper, normal time for things. The pervasiveness of a proper time was present in other incidents.

BOB: We made it here [to camp] on time.

RBD: On time?

BOB: Year, well, when we expected to.

Lots of talk about what time to get up and what time to leave camp. (Fieldnotes, Day Nine)

As another example, on Day Ten when the morning canoe packing went late Lynn commented in the morning, "OK, we missed getting out on time." The teens picked up on this orientation to clock time. The next day Bob reminded Lynn "Just think! We're only twenty minutes late right now." Another example included a participant scheduled solitude experience at 8:30 one night. It was done exactly then, which meant Lynn had to do the cleanup alone.

Scheduling by clock time helps in getting things done and gives goals to shoot for. Games were even developed around clock time--a contest to guess the time was held on one afternoon. That all of us were off by more than an hour shows how little attuned to our surroundings we were. A sensitivity to "natural time" may be a function of time spent in natural environments. Time spent in such environments may be a precursor to being affectively comfortable there.

Bob expressed a common perception of the trip that "we did a lot." One of the reasons that the van was not intrusive in some of the teens' experience of wilderness exploration was that the van was accepted as a necessary part of the trip. For many of the participants, the activities were a more important value of the trip than specifically experiencing the natural world. Still, this whirlwind of activity was not expressed as negatively as the busyness of home. While "we did a lot," there was still the sense of a slower pace without the sensation of busyness like at home in Strathcona County.

Routines

The formation of routines to organize the day did occur as the teens noticed,

RBD: Did you feel like you developed any daily routines on the trip?

KENNETH: Getting up and putting everything away every day. Like, I'd hear Lynn and I didn't want to get flying-burritoed again [dumped upside-down from the sleeping bag] so I got up, rolled everything up, threw everything in my bag, closed it up, pulled it tight. All I had to do was take down the tarp. Everyday, the first thing in the morning. Other than that I put up the tent.

RBD: Any other parts to the daily routine?

KENNETH: Well, nothing really an everyday routine. Like canoeing you had to work with the [canoes, but hiking it was packing the pack]. But it's routine for everybody. (Interview one)

JJ also addressed the formation of routines, especially at the campsite.

We didn't get long enough in the mountains, in the hiking. Like, everyday we had to leave in the morning. And that was a little bit of a drag because you have to get up really early and cook your breakfast and everything and by the time you got out of there it was probably like ten or eleven o'clock. And then you had like eight or ten kilometres to walk that day. (Interview one)

The routine the teens most recognized was the daily moving of camp. Danny once noted that the difference between home and the trip was the daily "Packing up your house."

The meal routine has already been addressed in the section on the campsite. Now that they had left the deep wilderness of the mountains and were camped next to the van, applying the familiar ways of functioning from home seemed to become more evident. Although we had picnic tables at every campsite on the backpack segment, on Day Five the cook group set up the table like a sit-down meal with plates, silverware and food in the centre. Gary was glad they now had wash basins although little difficulty in washing dishes on the trip had been apparent. Talk of home also occurred more often.

Taking Care Of Personal Business

The way the participants took care of personal cleanliness varied considerably. On the trip when Lynn made soap available, four teens washed their hair (as did I), and four did not (nor did Lynn). Water splashed on the face and swimming in cold lake or river were other methods of washing without soap, and were done nearly every day. Mackenzie and Gary both said their hair felt "grimy" but only Gary chose to wash it. Although his head was itchy, Peter explained his decision not to wash by saying, "It would have mattered if we were near civilization or lots of people but because the people I knew were all smelling the same it was no big deal." Luke washed his hair and even shaved once although he also said he liked the trip "because it didn't matter what you looked like."

The ones who chose not to wash with soap tended to explain that not washing belonged to the wilderness setting. Mackenzie said she chose not to wash because she had set in her mind "face it, we're not going to have showers [because] you're still on the trip and you [the leaders] told us we'd have no showers." Kenneth said not showering was "no

problem, as long as I'm not the only one." He also explained that "if everyone had done it [washing], well, ruins the whole atmosphere."

Deodorant was another issue. Nearly every day of the trip after the backpacking segment Danny put on deodorant. This began as we pulled into Canmore on Day Five as he unloaded the van to get deodorant for himself and JJ.

> They [several teens, including JJ, Danny and Luke] occasionally smell their armpits and comment how much they stink. JJ especially does this. When we hit Canmore yesterday, JJ and Danny put on Speed Stick. I told them it's a bad combination--deodorant and old sweat is rancid. It did not faze them. Kenneth listened and indicated agreement. (Fieldnotes, Day Six)

Buried in the pack, putting on deodorant took effort.

> Last night Danny was putting on deodorant. "I can't sleep because I smell," he said. He put on so much that I could smell it when he walked by. I commented on this. JJ affirmed it, "I can smell it all the way over here"--a distance of several feet. Gary and Danny were putting deodorant on this morning. (Fieldnotes, Day Seven)

The day of the river school JJ and Danny put deodorant on immediately after coming out of the water. Gary and Luke also put on deodorant at times. Kenneth, Bob and Mackenzie did not seem to have this concern although they maintained cleanliness according to my nose. A point against perfumed substances like shampoo and deodorant is that they attract insects, although this late in the summer insects were relatively rare.

Body functions were an example of how participants dealt with the novelty of the setting but tried to maintain familiar conventions. When Luke, Peter, and Danny went for a walk at the Lake Magog campground, their discovery of an outhouse cleaner than any we had yet seen was their only report. On Day Eleven, Gary changed clothes in the exceedingly stinky outhouse although there were dense bushes surrounding our campsite. His expression showed surprise when I asked why, but he did not answer and I did not press the issue.

One day two boys went to pee. I recorded the incident because it seemed symbolic of the attention given to such seemingly simple actions.

> Gary and Luke told me a story about "peeing in public." Apparently Gary went off to the bathroom around a slope yesterday. Luke went a bit later but not as far and was peeing when Gary came around a rock. They seemed to think that was really out there and told me with many laughs. (Fieldnotes, Day Eight)

Rather than being simply a normal body function, as it might be in a public washroom, this peeing in public was very unusual. Peeing in public is not something a person does at home.

You would not normally run into another person peeing. Two days later, the group stopped for an afternoon break.

> It was a long, flat island [that rose a few feet] above the river level. The boys went out and with much talk [about how exposed it was] peed. A few (JJ, Bob, ?) peed in the centre of island, hollering loudly for others not to look. (Fieldnotes, Day Ten)

Body functions is certainly one of the ignored subjects of much of North American society. Having had this conversation with other outdoor leaders and groups on much longer trips, I am aware that dealing with body wastes on a wilderness trip is a behaviour that varies considerably. I did not notice Mackenzie or Lynn's practices. Both of them remained discreet, slipping off into the forest as needed. Both also have a fair degree of outdoor experience so it may have been less of a new experience for them. In the end, this topic may say more about certain vocal boys, or mainstream social taboos than wilderness living. But as after a long time spent in the bush, body functions usually become almost unnoticed[12]. I commented on this in fieldnotes on Day Eight.

> I notice these boys go a long ways to pee and make sure no one can see them at all. I have not heard any comments about my habit of moving a few steps [behind a tree or bush] and going. They certainly travel farther than visual sightlines necessitate.

These routines and practices show a reaction to the unfamiliarity of the novel setting and the development of ways of dealing with it that were similar to practices at home. By doing so, the land was relegated to that of a setting or backdrop, the stage upon which to act out the drama of "teens interacting with teens in the wilderness."

Increasing Comfort Level

As time passed, the teens became noticeably more comfortable in the trip setting. Packing got done quicker, meals were tastier (although they took far longer to prepare), people managed to keep warm while sleeping, more people were sleeping outside and doing

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[12]A bestseller in camping stores has been written on the subject. K. Meyer. (1989) How to Shit in the Woods. As an outdoor leader, it is vital to help participants become comfortable peeing or "doing the dukey" in the outdoors. This presents a lot of internal distress to some people. I have known participants to try to avoid defecating for over a week. I have also spoken with instructors and tree planters who have spent entire summers in the bush where one could pee pretty well anywhere and anytime needed. "In town I have a hard time holding it until I find a bathroom," one lamented. Another commented that he forgets for a half-second that he can't just turn around and aim at the nearest tree when needed.

so even when clouds threatened. Participants were putting litter in their pockets although initially they had rejected the idea. "I'm not putting that in my pocket!" said JJ on an early day.

On Day One as one cook group prepared pasta they refused to drink the pasta water. By Day Nine, they were busy finding the best spice combination to flavour the hot drink. "Cooking is a process of self-discovery: [It is] learning to cook/learning to cook in the backcountry." I wrote on the trip as an interpretation of the meal preparation. Camp cooking is a different task than cooking in a kitchen. Early in the trip they had insisted on having a scrubbie with which to clean dishes. On Day Seven I noted, "People are using fingers to wash dishes. Again another change in sensitivity."

Flashlights are another example of this increasing comfort level. On Day One Lynn had addressed use of flashlights since we kept getting beams directed in eyes. Night vision takes some time to develop and is wrecked by light. On Day Three JJ was asked to give up his light since it kept getting flashed during the evening community meeting. But by Day Seven I recorded

> Last night no one at all used a flashlight to walk back from the sundance circles. Tonight hardly anyone was using flashlights for much except things you need to. Certainly far different use than the early days of the trip when my eyes burned with lights beamed into them.

The teens had become more comfortable at functioning in the weakened visual clarity of darkness.

Play also changed. We had played games like "Handshake Killer," a rhythmic handslapping game, and a couple "New Games." But as the trip wore on, the teens played chase and other less officially organized games. They skipped rocks frequently and created activities original to the social group or the natural setting rather than needing games with rules, led by an individual.

Even the relationship with time was revised as the participants adapted more to diurnal patterns. Furthermore, the application of clock time in organizing routines was inconsistent. Even when we all knew the time by clock, we ate after we had gone far enough before lunch or when people got hungry. "[As we began to eat] someone asked what time it was. Another teen answered "Lunchtime." I heard no follow up with numerals. After lunch someone did say it was 1:10." (Fieldnotes, Day Eleven)

The teens reminded each other to drink water and learned many of the little things that make functioning in the backcountry environment more effective. Luke summed it up for himself during the second interview,

> I guess I was kinda learning stuff on the way, unconsciously... Like tying a rope from your spoon to your mug so you don't lose your spoon. Or tying your mug to your cap [meaning the mug lid] so you don't lose the cap. I use it here. I learned it and if I didn't go on that trip I wouldn't have learned it... That was outdoor survival. Well, not survival but making the outdoors easier to live in.

In effect, a new way of functioning was developing. As well, a new understanding of the wilderness environment was emerging. When a ranger drove by while we parked in Kootenay Plains group campground someone asked if there were any bears here. "Sure, you're in the wilderness now," the ranger replied. Gary shook his head and snorted in disdain, "No we're not. We hiked 27 [sic] damn kilometres [on the backpack segment]." Gary had a new concept of the wilderness.

Discussion and Summary

The teens on the Wilderness Explorations trip effectively created a mini-society with its own group norms and ways of functioning. The novel setting and activities required the members of the group to develop different ways of functioning. In part, this meant dealing with the natural environment, which is different from the built environments of which they are most experienced.

An organizing domain of this society seemed to be an underlying tension between exploring the unfamiliar and maintaining contact with the familiar. While exploration and challenge was the motivation for the trip the participants sought to balance this pressure. Staying with the group, working together to make it fun, and helping each other were some of the ways this occurred. To manage the perception of risk, fear, discomfort and this new and unfamiliar world of nature participants sought familiarity. But the novelty of the experience rather than the old routine of home was also part of the appeal of the trip. Participants approached one side then veered toward the other side of the tension. The challenge for a leader, and ultimately the members of the group, is to balance these contradicting needs as individuals will be at different places in the 'veer.'

Making It Like Home

From my perspective, as a person more experienced and comfortable in the wilderness setting, the participants tended toward the familiar as methods of functioning arose that were more representative of home than of the backcountry. The action to "make

the trip like home" seemed to be a tacit reaction to the unfamiliar and novel wilderness environment. This theme varied among individuals and over time on the trip.

While living in a different reality, the easiest ways of operating are those that are most familiar (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). These actions could be seen as attempts to maintain control by re-exerting the guise of the familiar onto the trip and setting. The use of clock time to organize daily schedules is an example of bringing something from one reality into the wilderness setting. A latent assumption that home is the 'real world' is evident in Kenneth's comment at dinner on Day Six, "7:30 and we're still cooking supper. When I go home and have to eat at normal times... " (Fieldnotes, Day Six). Home was still the template for understanding the world. Eating three meals a day instead of maintaining a constant energy level, putting on deodorant and washing hair, not drinking water, and talking frequently about home are other methods the teens employed to keep the trip experience from becoming too far removed or different from their home lives. More than anywhere else, the van was a place where they had control over the environment. The teens could be warm or cold as desired, travel quickly without limitations imposed by hills or fatigue, sit in familiar seats and engage in familiar activities like music. Dislike of the van seemed to be in proportion to the participant's desire for an experience of the nature world.

The teens even occasionally referred to the trip as "home." Luke said the van was "kinda like home" because you didn't have to worry about making sure things stayed dry. He said he didn't mind being wet "but I hate being damp." As we have seen, physical discomfort seemed to be expected on the trip so was not an cause of negative feelings.

On day Six, JJ finally cooked a meal with his cook group. In the community meeting that night he reminded everyone of this. "I helped around the house, er around the--," he said. Danny even referred to the pack as his house after I noticed he talked about the wilderness setting and home differently. "Well, there's wilderness out there and civilization here. It's permanent housing here and where we were you could pack up your little house and truck on to somewhere else. It's kind of neat, packing up your house."

The emphasis on the social group of peers, especially considering the relegation of deliberate attention to nature as an odd behaviour, is another similarity between the trip and home. Although opportunity to get alone or wander off was available, the teens took less and less occasion for this as the trip wore on. In these examples and other ways the teens acted to make the trip somewhat like home. By doing so, the land was relegated to that of a setting or backdrop, the stage upon which to act out the drama of "teens interacting with teens in the wilderness." I can't help but think this action on the trip is the sacred myth of our culture

written smaller, namely, to manage and control the earth for our purposes. We build our cities and create our societies with little thought for the land upon which we exist.

The type of environment in the segments later in the trip may have contributed to the decrease in attention to the natural. On a canoe trip, there was a very different sense of the beauty than on the backpacking segment. Mountains--big, impressive views--compel attention. The forests and river did not seem to have the same charisma to encourage observation and exploration. Also, since the focus was canoeing the river, the forest may have been offstage and essentially forgotten. The same is also somewhat true in the backpack segment. Both trails and river are linear, routes of travel that pass through but are set apart from the surrounding forest. We never ventured off trail and into the place itself. In some regards we were still observers standing on the path and looking in, but never going in ourselves.

The theme of inattention to the natural world arose partly as a result of program design. The hidden curriculum emphasized the group and social experience thereby diminishing the deliberate experience of nature. Other examples of program contribution to this norm include the relatively little program planned to encourage careful attention to the natural world.

The theme of "making it like home" helps to explain many of the actions of the participants that, from my perspective, seemed out of place. It also helps me consider my own actions as leader and the ways I need to help participants explore this new (to them) world while avoiding excessive distress.

One way to deal with the tension between exploring this new world and new experiences and maintaining a sense of the familiar was to stay with the group. Used to the hustle and bustle of the home environment, and the constant interaction with other people, staying with the group was more normal than going off on one's own. As we shall see in the next chapter, a very significant characteristic of nature was its unfamiliarity. By staying with the group, in essence, the teens could explore together and keep it safe, both emotionally, i.e. fear, and physically.

New Ways Of Functioning

Humans obviously have a tendency to maintain some level of familiarity in new settings. We need to know how to behave. Therefore, we consult prior experience and knowledge to decide the appropriateness of various responses to a situation. Over time, the

teens became more comfortable in the natural setting and began to develop new ways of functioning. The following examples illustrate this point.

When backpacking, weight is a concern. Every person carries limited clothing, which always includes a rain jacket. We carried these on every day. On Day Five my fieldnotes contained this thought:

> I notice that often when getting cold, the teens will sit and shiver without putting on more clothes. Also seems to be a refusal to put on raingear for other purposes [than rain], like to keep warm. I notice this in other trips. It's a bit of a watershed moment when [participants] finally do [put on the rainjacket for warmth]. As if, 'now wearing it doesn't really matter.'

A culture is described by the acquired knowledge used to interpret experience and generate behaviour (Spradley, 1980). In this case, a truly different culture was in the process of formation as they got rid of old knowledge ("The raingear is for rain.") and created new ways of functioning to deal with a different reality ("It's cold, the raingear will keep me warm."). During the canoeing on the last three days many of the teens wore raingear at various times and not just because waves splashed into the boats.

Luke alluded on the last day to this new way of functioning and different standards that he had developed.

> Luke said he's going to get in trouble when he goes home. Why? Asked Lynn. "Well, 'cause I haven't cleaned my bowl in four days. and I'm OK with that. And when I drop something in the dirt I pick it up anyways and eat it. And I'll do that at home." Lynn told him, "That's the ten second rule." If on the ground less than ten seconds the germs don't have enough time to jump on it. (Fieldnotes, Day Eleven)

The participants modified some of the ways in which they functioned in this wilderness setting as they spent more time in it. But for the deep-seated societal change needed to protect the earth, an increasing comfort in the wilderness, or even significant changes in individual personal behaviour, is not enough. A change in mindset is also needed. Nature as an unexamined construction not worthy of notice, or as a mere backdrop for human interaction, is not a sufficient grounding upon which to base an environmental concern. Nature is truly one of the fundamental taken-for-granted upon which we humans rest our lives.

A benefit of this research project has been for me to consider how these norms form and the impact they may have on the participants' experiences of the natural world. It also made me keen to investigate how the teens viewed nature and what it meant to them outside

the wilderness trip setting. In the final chapter suggestions will be made for leaders about encouraging a trip culture that may influence participants towards more environmental concern. Before that, and to shed more light on the trip experience, the participants' constructions of nature will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATURE

In the preceding chapter I introduced the notion that the primary problem or tension that the participants were trying to resolve was the contrary tugs of exploring the unfamiliar and maintaining a satisfactory familiarity. The group also operated under a tacit rule that deliberate attention to nature was unusual, even 'odd.' In this chapter I have focused on the participants' reflection upon the experience of nature during the Wilderness Explorations trip.

The primary way that the group defined the natural setting in which they travelled was through a dichotomous polarization of "nature" and "civilization." The two notions seemed to be black and white--mutually exclusive realities not even part of a continuum. We shall explore the qualities attributed to nature, with reference also to the qualities the teens attributed to civilization. The chapter will end with an analysis of the affective bonds built with the natural world, and the contradictions that a grey world will provide when painted with that zebra-coloured brush.

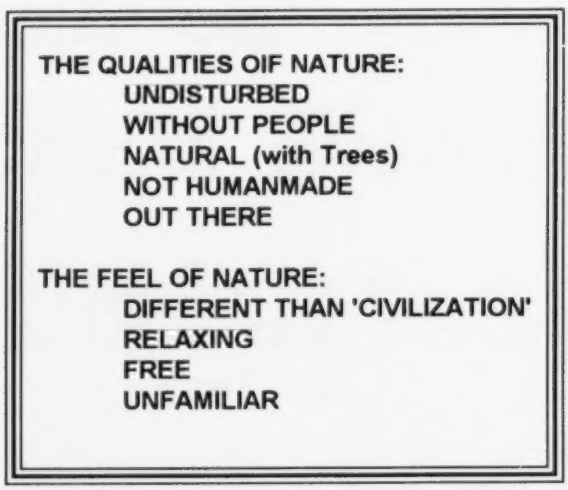
Qualities of Nature

When the teens were asked what "nature" meant to them, the answer most often provided was "not civilization." This term was in use by the second day of the trip. It was clearly understood and referred to Edmonton and Strathcona County, the towns we passed through (Canmore and Rocky Mountain House), even the van, a roadside rest stop and anything ahead as we approached the end of the trail and river. Civilization was understood, while nature was a far more ambiguous notion. Defined by what it is not more than what it is, nature was still appealing as a place undisturbed by humans, without humanmade intrusions, relaxing, freeing, beautiful, full of trees and mountains. Ultimately, nature was "out there" rather than in Sherwood Park. Civilization, on the other hand was humanmade, familiar, busy and confining, with garbage, pollution, lots of people and a distinct lack of nature. Figure 5 lists these qualities of nature and civilization.

Undisturbed

Right from the start of the pre-trip planning meetings wilderness was defined by the teens as "undisturbed by humans." When Lynn asked the group in the first meeting what they thought wilderness was, the responses included trees, animals, water. Kenneth added "unsettled." When asked to clarify, he added "where people leave it [alone]."

Figure 5. The characteristics of Nature described by the trip participants.



A moment later, Lynn defined wilderness for them,

> Now, just for fun today, I went to the dictionary.... I looked up wilderness... "a region uncultivated, uninhabited by human beings." So that was one. Another one was "an area undisturbed by human activity, together with its natural development." So wilderness is definitely an area undisturbed by human activity. (Pre-trip notes, July 11)

The teens applied this notion of "undisturbed" to nature in general. Bob stated that nature consists of "undisturbed land basically. No permanent marks of interference." JJ felt nature "is what was originally here before industrialization.... everything that was natural." When comparing which segments felt most natural JJ, Bob and Luke used "untouched" to explain their preferences for a natural setting.

For Mackenzie the Strathcona Wilderness Centre couldn't provide a feeling of nature partly because there are too many trails and because of the perception of human things--real nature was more undisturbed. On the other hand, she did refer later to Strathcona Wilderness Centre as a place that was "mainly undisturbed" as the reason she would be more proactive there, picking up trash and being concerned for the environment. A place like town? "It's already impacted," she said, so whatever you do "doesn't make much of a difference."

Peter said "natural" was "undisturbed." He went on to say that other things could disturb nature but "just not civilization--you know, people." All the teens felt that the concept 'civilization' was the negative influence on nature. For Gary nature meant "the outdoors, and away from civilization. The way things normally are." When asked to clarify 'normally' he said, "the way things are made to be, not affected by humans." In a tone almost dripping with awe immediately after the backpacking segment, JJ commented, "Everything was so untouched by civilization. No fires, no ruined places."

Many more examples of this characteristic are present in fieldnotes and interview transcripts. Nature was almost uniformly seen by the teens as a place that is undisturbed by human impacts. We will discuss later the confusing issue of backcountry developments.

No People, Except Us

Another characteristic of nature for these teens was it's scarcity of people. Again, this characteristic was ambiguous, especially considering the importance of the group as presented last chapter. The members of the group did not have the same effect on the character of nature as did encounters with other people.

Danny was emphatic that nature is where people are not. He was equally certain that civilization "is where there's lots of people." Kenneth stated that "nature is--we don't stay there or anything... Trees are a part of nature but not us." Mackenzie perceived nature as "probably being totally disconnected from people." On the trip Luke commented on the lack of people,

> As four of us backpacked up a narrow trail through the dense lodgepole pines on the last push to Assiniboine Pass, Luke turned and said, "This is what I meant about a backcountry feeling."
>
> "You've got it now?" I asked, because he'd told me earlier that day that he hadn't. "What's it like?"
>
> "Um. " He struggled to put the feeling into words. "Like I'm way out here. It's different, like no one's around." (Fieldnotes, Day Two)

We encountered other people occasionally on both the river and backpack segments. In most cases these were fleeting encounters. Two extended encounters with other users were mentioned in post-trip interviews. On Day Four the group met another American who worked in outdoor education and led the group in some silly pre-hike stretches on Day Four. And meeting and hiking with several Englishmen was mentioned as a highlight by several teens.

JJ said he wanted to live out there and, perhaps remembering these encounters, in the first interview felt he would "meet all kinds of people who enjoy the same interests as you out there." Still, minimal encounters with people were an important part of the experience of nature and essential in providing a sense of connection with the natural world for several of the teens, including Mackenzie, JJ and Kenneth. For example, during the first interview, Mackenzie explained when she felt this sense of connection.

> Mainly all the hiking. Well, not all of it. but when we were like 'in deeper.' I don't know when that was but it was kinda like not at the very start but kinda like in the middle. Like there was really not many people at all and so you just kinda bonded with nature.

On the river, perceptions differed regarding the effect of encountering other people. Bob felt particularly connected or close to nature "when we were canoeing 'cause there was nothing around besides the Voyageurs [two large canoe loads of tourists]... not that much in backpacking because there were already trails made up." On one occasion during the backpacking segment, Peter was walking with Bob and I when Peter said the wide, road-like trail reminded him that lots of people go into the Mt. Assiniboine backcountry. Perhaps the development reminded Bob also of the numbers of people although another interpretation

could also have been the human construction of the trail. Built items were also not considered characteristic of nature, as shall be discussed shortly.

Gary felt differently from Bob regarding the impact of people on his sense of the natural. He said the time at Mt. Assiniboine felt close to nature but the river did not. Later he explained, "Well, backpacking--all it was was a trail. But on the canoe trip it was nature while we were canoeing. But when we got to a camp it was more developed and there was a lot of other people there."

As a characteristic of nature, "no people" was important. However, the group itself was not an inhibiting factor. JJ said that we didn't see anyone, then amended his comment to say the group didn't count. Luke made a similar observation. This anomaly seems to lend additional support for the group norm emphasizing staying together in this unfamiliar environment .

Except for the group members, the trip participants did not interact significantly or encounter many other people. This sets nature in contrast to "civilization," which has lots of people. Danny stated it simply in the first interview, civilization is "where there's lots of people." Gary, Luke, and JJ all commented in the first interview that they did not like the city because of this characteristic. For all of them this was associated with a busy and noisy place. JJ was the most emphatic,

> I like being around the city, but--. I know everybody from all over. I just go to school or go hang out at someone's house after school. But I never hit the malls or anything like that. I can't stand being in there.... It's so loud and all the people running into you and the smoke and all the greasy food and yeeecch. (Interview one)

Four months later JJ was talking about his desire for change and variety. But the city, specifically going downtown, wouldn't work: "Un-unh. (shaking his head for emphasis) Too many people there." Gary also spoke about how being out in nature was more appealing than being at his house. "There's lots of people here," he said even though he lives on an acreage out of town. Later he commented on other factors caused by the numbers of people,

> Yeah. But I wouldn't want to live in the city. 'Cause I lived in the city before.... Why wouldn't I? 'Cause it's too noisy. You can't really do what you want.... If you want to play your music you can't because the neighbours would complain. You can't really have a party 'cause they`ll complain... (Interview one)

Still later, referring to a comment he had just made, I asked,

> RBD: So what is it about houses and cars and all that jazz that you don't like?
>
> GARY: Too loud. And if someone has a house right next to you--privacy I guess.

Even on the trip, civilization was associated with many people. On Day Ten Danny ended the community meeting,

DANNY: I miss civilization

JJ: You miss-----[his girlfriend].

DANNY: No, I miss civilization.

RBD: What do you mean, civilization?

DANNY: Well, lots of people. (Fieldnotes, Day Ten)

The busyness, noise and other factors caused by the numbers of people in their home communities were also mentioned by Mackenzie and Luke. As we shall see shortly, these characteristics are incongruent with the participants' perceptions of nature.

Natural--There's Trees And Then There's *Trees*

When asked about nature in the interviews, Kenneth and JJ said nature was hard to explain. In conversation, the term tended to refer to particular things. One participant referred to "the trees, the ground, water." Another teen mentioned the "animals and trees." A third teen referred to the "fixed environment and the natural environment."

Trees came up numerous times, and seemed to help define nature. Trees were fundamental to the conceptions of nature. JJ and Kenneth reported that nature was "trees and stuff." Danny called nature "a place where there's trees and they let trees grow." Trees played a part in Danny's pre-trip expectations of wilderness explorations he said in the first meeting. "Well, I was expecting that we'd walk through the trees for two weeks. (Others giggle.) I don't want to do that though."

After the trip, several of the teens referred to trees in describing generally when they felt a sense of closeness to nature. "Looking at the trees go by. And then walking past, walking around," said Bob. "Probably when we were on the hike and the canoeing trip 'cause we were always around trees and stuff. That's probably when I felt closest to nature," said Danny. JJ described a sense of belonging that occurred when "we were out in the woods just walking around."

Perhaps it was the contrast with the suburban environment in which most of these teens live that so closely linked trees as the symbol of nature. Gary liked the natural feel on the trip because "it's more nature than we have at our house. More trees." This is so although Gary lives on an acreage out of town. Kenneth, Mackenzie, and JJ made similar statements. Bob felt the same way, as this exchange during the first interview indicates.

BOB: You were there [on the trip], I think. I definitely have to say there was an environment there.

RBD: Is there one here?

BOB: Don't see too many trees so I guess not really.

He later said that among the reasons the trip wasn't like home was because, "There were a lot of trees. I have maybe five in the backyard." Mackenzie used trees to explain when and why she felt a sense of separation from nature in the towns in which we stopped, "In the van and Canmore and Rocky Mountain House. But I think those are kind of natural things to feel that you're kind of separated from it because you are right in civilization and stuff. There's like, not a tree in sight."

In the second interview several people again referred to the presence or lack of trees to make the point that at home there is little or no nature. Peter had said that trees on the trip were natural but home wasn't very natural. When I suggested that there were trees here he seemed to say that these trees aren't natural and they live in a place that isn't natural at all. Pointing to the ornamental tree outside her living room window, Mackenzie said that the tree wasn't even natural. She explained by saying,

> The trees [in Sherwood Park] are already touched and rearranged and planted... You should treat [Sherwood Park and the wilderness] with equal respect because you don't want to go chopping down trees in Sherwood Park just because it's not the wilderness, because we have a lot less trees."

Gary also commented on why he liked it out there, and less than in Strathcona County,

GARY: Sometimes it's just nice to see all the trees.

RBD: but you have trees at home, in your backyard you said.

GARY: But different kind of trees there. It's better.

RBD: Why better?

GARY: Because it smells like trees. It doesn't at home

Using all his senses, the trip experience was a different experiential reality than home for Gary.

Several teens made reference to the woods or forest. Mackenzie had hiked part of the trail alone and described a time as a time she had a strong sense of closeness to nature. " Well, do you remember hiking and it was like that wood-chip trail? It was like wood chips and there were trees on all sides of us and it was really dark in the trees and stuff. I remember that so well." Peter seemed to allude to a similar role of the forest. Walking on the last day of the backpacking segment he said the wide trail did not seem like wilderness.

Wilderness should not have any trails. In response to my query, he said a hundred yards off the trail into the forest would be wilderness.

The forest also played a part in Kenneth's comparison of two rivers. He denied the wilderness feel of the North Saskatchewan River, even far upstream where we canoed, because it flowed through Edmonton and was not very natural. The Fraser River in British Columbia, however, seemed like nature, partly because of the forests covering the hills that lined its banks.

Because this aspect of the natural world is not present, or at least not present in the same way, in their home environment., the forest may symbolize nature for these teens. It was unfamiliar. The lack of forests in Sherwood Park contributed to the perception of little or no nature at home. Mountains were also mentioned frequently in the context of being "natural." We saw the role of impressive views in the last chapter. The paucity of mountains and forests in Sherwood Park contribute to the perception of the lack of nature there.

Out There

According to the teens, nature is undisturbed. It has few or no people. It has lots of trees, mountains and rivers. By insinuation nature has to be somewhere else than the teens' home communities. For example, Bob said he thought about nature on the trip, but not at home. Why? "Because I was in nature then" he said. Danny said "he hasn't been to many places in nature."

For Kenneth, nature is "a place we don't stay," an assertion which sets nature aside as a place away from his own habitation. Furthermore, he said an appreciation comes "from being out there so long (emphasis added)." JJ said he felt some ambiguity about returning home, " I would like to live out there and just visit here. Not live here and visit there." Mackenzie felt her environmental concern was expressed mostly when "I'm out in the wilderness... I'm out there so it's kinda like I'm concerned." Gary's thoughts about the environment was that it was nice to be in "a whole environment, whole nature. Just to be out there, not like this here." When Luke commented on the trip he said "out there" a different standard of behaviour is accepted.

You don't have to look a certain way. You know, like you don't have to have your clothes be in fashion. You can just wear whatever. And you don't have to like, have combed your hair just right and that kinda thing, because you can't see yourself. And everyone is like that. You can be yourself, you know, like you normally are and no one cares.

Nature, constructed as forested and undisturbed, with few people and a different standard of behaviour, was unanimously recognized by the teens as elsewhere from their homes. We will return to this quality of nature in the teens' description of nature at home.

Not Manmade

The human built environment is in direct contrast to the "natural" environment. As a definitive characteristic of civilization, humanmade items were not part of nature. As JJ asserted, "Man-made stuff is unnatural, and nature-made stuff is natural." Kenneth agreed that civilization is "anything human constructed, made by humans." Danny assured me that Strathcona County was indeed civilization. What is civilization? "Where there's like lots of people, cement everywhere. It's not really natural." On Day Eleven, as the hills and forest gave way to farm and ranchlands Gary pointed at one of the now occasional houses set back from the riverbank. "Hey Randy, we're getting closer to civilization." When asked, others cited cars, roads, houses, permanent houses, pollution, telephone wires and other material constructions in their definitions of civilization.

In this manner, Canmore and Rocky Mountain house were likewise labelled, and even the gas station establishment at Saskatchewan River Crossing. "This is civilization" said several, and JJ talked excitedly about flushing a toilet after four days with only outhouses. But instead of going inside the building, the teens congregated in the sun and brisk wind outside.

The shared understanding of 'civilization' was made early. By the fourth day the term had arisen enough for Lynn to plan to address it on the pre-trail briefing the next morning. "This is a transition day. We are heading out and back to civilization. But we want to try to keep our time in town short and our mindset still in wilderness explorations mode (Fieldnotes, Day Five)." Even heading out to the van was referred to as a return to civilization. In the first interview, Mackenzie described her impression of returning to the van, "I didn't want to go back to civilization because [in the van] you were closed in again." After the trip Mackenzie said "any signs of civilization hindered me." However, later in the first interview, she said after everyone calmed down in their excitement the van wasn't "that big of deal."

Other teens said that things like TV didn't belong out in nature. JJ said he wanted to live there and that he wouldn't take a TV. But on the trip he frequently expressed a desire to get home or get a shower and when we reached the last night's campsite he found the campground's rec hall and played ping-pong while watching TV. The ambiguity between keeping track of the familiar and exploration seems to be demonstrated in JJ's actions.

Not only visible impacts disturbed the feeling of nature. During the backpack segment helicopters flew frequently, their harsh staccato shattering the more natural silence and peace of the woods. On Day Four I recorded this exchange,

> Helicopter came over. Kenneth said "What a sound of nature." Other helicopters came later and I asked what they thought of them. Kenneth repeated [his comment] and Mackenzie said they kind of disturbed her experience. (Fieldnotes, Day Four)

Conversely, the teens would frequently distinguish nature by "not manmade." Gary explained, "At Cavalcade it wasn't very close to nature and stuff, 'cause there's roads, a big highway right close, and telephone and stuff. And on the river it wasn't close to nature 'cause there's campsites developed... "

Backcountry Development

Considering the close identification of human fabrications with civilization and its consequent incompatibility with nature, the issue of backcountry developments arises. Our campsites on the backpack segment contained a picnic table on several occasions, established tent platforms, bear hang poles or cables, an outhouse within thirty meters every night. On the canoe segment each night we pulled off the river into an established campground with split wood, outhouses, picnic tables, loop roads and cars driving through the campground. In between we camped next to the van and drove from site to site. Of course, we carried packs, stoves, fuel, coolers and other sundry items.

On the layover day at Mt. Assiniboine, we walked over to the Ranger station, hoping to share tea with the ranger as the sign promised. Past the Lodge and cabins, then along the lake to the campsite. The big structure stood out on the hillside watching over the dozen or so well-kept smaller buildings scattered on the margin of trees and meadow. The teens made many comments like, "Why is this here?" and later wished they hadn't seen it. At the time, several of the teens said it wrecked their experience. In the first interview Kenneth recalled what hindered his appreciation of the natural setting,

> ... And the cabins when we were up there on the hiking trip... Those cabins that they had at Lake Magog. They just weren't nature.... Even if we had gone around the other way... That way just saw a glimpse of them. That way would have been better.

Gary agreed, "The least nature was when we went to that lodge."

For Kenneth, the picnic tables and all were "no big deal," but the cabins were too much. Bob described the role of humanmade objects in his feeling of closeness to nature.

BOB: When we were canoeing 'cause there was nothing around besides the voyagers. Not that much backpacking because there were already trails made up. And climbing. Climbing and canoeing. When we were climbing there weren't too many bolts on that, on the faces and that. And there weren't really trails leading up there so it wasn't really disturbed and same with canoeing.

The rest of the teens were unanimous in rejecting climbing as a segment in which they felt a closeness to the natural setting. The roads and people were hindrances. For example I asked Peter if he had a different feeling about "nature" in the backpacking part than in the climbing or caving part. At first he said "NO." Then he said it was more natural because it wasn't as disturbed by highways and cars and civilization. The only time those segments seemed natural was "on the caving when we were going up the steps"--the steep portion when we began scrambling up the tree roots holding the hillside together.

Mackenzie had asserted the same opinion, but moderated her view:

The climbing was kind of set out in a big field and there was the highway and stuff. But after you got into it.... you didn't even notice it. Like I guess you just had to get into it. Like I was just getting used to it at the start and I guess I noticed those things.

Civilization consists of humanmade material things. Items of this character were not part of nature. However, some backcountry development was accepted as belonging in the wilderness setting. The acceptability of backcountry development seems to coincide to the group's use of the items, i.e., picnic tables but not cabins were accepted.

Pollution and Garbage

Pollution was clearly something that belongs to civilization. Both JJ and Gary made a passing reference to fresh air on the trip--with the assumption that it was in contrast to air at home. Then while canoeing through Rocky Mountain House we passed several buildings and two pipes pouring effluent into the river. Kenneth specifically mentioned them in the first interview. "It kind of shredded what there was of nature." All the teens were disgusted by the pipes; "It's a pissfall," said both Gary and Luke that evening.

There seemed to be a type of fatalism that accepted pollution as a part of civilization. For example, Kenneth stated in the first interview, "It's nice to have some civilization. Some things are good. And then you have bad things they're doing, like pollution killing us. [Civilization is] sorta good, sorta bad." Neither he nor anyone else admitted much concern put into action about pollution or other environmental issues at home. However, garbage on the trip was another matter. Even here there was considerable ambiguity, as has been

described in the last chapter. While nature was an important component of the trip, a group theme was that deliberate attention to it was unusual. This theme extended only partially toward garbage on the trip.

"We cared for the environment on the trip," said Bob, "We cleaned up all our mess, even other people's messes." On Day Four I gave the group a competition to pick up the most trash on the day's hike. Several of the teens, notably JJ, Gary, Danny, and Bob made a strong effort. JJ even pulled an old fire grill out of the lake and skeins of old fishing line. In my notes, I recorded that I asked him why he was making such an effort. He mentioned something about making it nice for other people.

On Day Nine, upon arriving at the night's campground we found the site a mess: firepit filled with debris, trash strewn about the trees. Even garbage and litter lay scattered on the picnic tables and adjacent campsites. Lynn brought the group up and everyone pitched in. "Damn, look at that shit!" exploded Gary. Mackenzie depicted it two weeks later as "disgusting." Garbage generally inhibited her feeling of closeness to nature. "Garbage just doesn't belong there," she said, surprised that I would even question why she made an effort to do garbage sweeps before we left campsites in the morning.

A number of the teens mentioned garbage in the backcountry as a hindrance to their appreciation of the natural world. In some ways, litter brought civilization into the backcountry. "Out there... there should be no garbage or roads and stuff," said Gary. During the first interview, JJ said he thought about the garbage and the human role in this setting:

> Like why is there people up here ruining the land? 'Cause you know, how we picked up all that litter. Like when you come up here you're supposed to backpack everything out with you.... Some people deserved to be up here and others didn't. 'Cause some people were just making it look worse, look bad. Some people were making it look better. People who made it look bad were littering and everything. They didn't deserve to be up there. The people who were picking up the garbage after the other people deserved to be up there more.

At some times JJ was actively involved in picking up litter; on other occasions he would sit and watch as others did camp sweeps. He went to extremes in the litter competition. Another time he forgot to pick up a plastic bag he found while looking for something else but still came back irritated by the litter.

Several teens mentioned that after returning they were more conscious to avoid littering themselves. Six months after the trip, Danny even showed me the candy wrapper in his pocket from that day's lunch. But their environmental activism at home was somewhat

isolated to not littering. On the trip, litter pick-up was synonymous with environmental concern for the teens. Litter does not belong in nature--it is humanmade after all, an intrusion from civilization.

The Feel of Nature

While they often had difficulty articulating it, the "feel of nature" was essential for the teens in constructing nature. Their descriptions hint that there was something they felt "out there" that they did not feel in the city or at home. Furthermore, it contributed to the perception that there is no nature at home. This section will focus on these affective qualities. It is very hard to segregate each of these qualities because within real people our emotional states overlap and are bound together with our thoughts (Bannister and Fransella, 1980). Furthermore, the teen's descriptions 'fuzzy'--language is an imprecise representation of their experience. The section will conclude with the description of connection or closeness to nature that the teens related.

The feel of nature is subtle. The teens at times felt uncomfortable talking about it. At different times on the trip, I spoke with Luke, Bob, Mackenzie, JJ and Gary about this ineffable feeling. On these occasions, these conversations turned almost mystical but were abruptly cut off, as if we were digging too deeply. The tacit rule to avoid deep appreciation of nature may have been in effect. Other subjects were rarely so bluntly terminated although, to be sure, few deeply personal topics were ever addressed.

In the interviews the teens were scarcely more free to discuss this topic. Kenneth may have spoken for all of us. After he and I had talked about one time when he had felt close to nature, I asked him to tell more about some other occasions. He replied grudgingly, "Well, I'm not really into talking about it because it's a real in deep thing."

Without question, the participants made a distinction between the feeling of being in the city and that of being outdoors or in the natural world. This unanimity (although not without qualification) caused me to question why the desire for the natural world.

Kenneth commented in the second interview that he liked the natural setting better, "Because it was closer to nature. So much of a different feeling than here with all the streets. Much different." He also said, experiencing nature was the most important part of the trip for him and his motive for going. Danny struggled to explain why he would prefer a trip in a natural setting rather than an adventurous urban experience.

RBD: You're saying that its different-how's it different?

DANNY: Well they're both experiences, like they're both different experiences that you haven't done before... Just that one you may like more than the other.

RBD: Which one do you think you would like more than the other?

DANNY: Well, you kind of like them both. Ah, and, I don't know. It's kind of hard to decide. I mean, like they're both fun... I'd probably pick the nature one.

JJ echoed this preference for the natural setting and several others made similar remarks. Gary insisted that he did not want to live in the city, preferring a place with "more trees." Luke was most emphatic about living in a natural setting, suggesting it was a better place. Later he did admit that he "wasn't one of those people who [only] likes nature and hates the city."

The strength of these statements is almost enough to suggest that there is some ineffable inner desire for the feel of the natural. Kenneth, however, keeps us from inferring too much in this direction,

RBD: Is it important to you at all to get close to nature, to have a natural setting?

KENNETH: Not a need or anything like that. I *like* [his emphasis] doing it. But... it's not, like, a need.

Still, there is some quality in the teens' descriptions of the feel of the natural world that suggests there is a subtle *something* that struck a responsive chord in them. As Peter said, surprised I even had to ask why nature is important, "Because it's nice and all." Nature had a set of affective characteristics that the teens recognized with surprising uniformity.

The Feel of Relaxing

The participants associated a feeling of relaxation with a natural setting with far more regularity than in the city. "Relaxing" was used by the different teens in various ways to mean not busy, free, and away from other distractions. Here we will briefly summarize this characteristic before moving on to related ones.

The teens described a wide variety of times in which they felt relaxed. Included were occasions in which they found themselves alone, like the solitude activities. Hiking or canoeing was mentioned as relaxing by several teens including JJ, Mackenzie and Kenneth, Kenneth explained that trip and home were different kinds of relaxation and enjoyment. Home is usually physically relaxing, but he is often concentrating in front of a computer or in school. Therefore, home is, "Sorta relaxing but not as much as it could be. Not as much as it would be on that trip... [On] the trip would be [like] 'enjoying being relaxed,' doing something different. Here I would be [like] 'enjoying what I would be doing.'" While not physically relaxing, the trip was different from home, and mentally relaxing most of the time.

Bob, Kenneth, Gary and Danny specifically referred to a different, more relaxed pace, especially on the canoe segment.

Both Mackenzie and Luke mentioned the lack of worries as a contributor to the relaxed feeling. "Not having to worry about anything," said Luke. Mackenzie told me when she felt the most relaxed, "Probably hiking. That's the most relaxing thing I think. Because you're just walking and you have everything around you... And you just look around... and [think] 'This is awesome.' And there's nothing to worry about." She continued by talking about the cave when the lights were off, and the late evening campfires after everything was done and "the only thing you had to do was go to bed." I then commented,

> RBD: You felt most relaxed it sounds to me because there weren't other worries. It's not like the worries got washed away from your mind, it's just that there weren't other ones.
>
> MACKENZIE: Yeah!! (Very enthusiastic.) Yeah. And you just totally forget when there's all that beauty surrounding you. I'm sure when... we were nearing the van [on the last hiking day] I was like, "Oh god, I have to do this and this and this when I get home." But when I was just hiking by myself, I wasn't even thinking about anything. I was just hiking around.

Seemingly, the van, as an element or symbol of civilization, intruded into the feel of nature for Mackenzie and pulled her into the mindset of that other world.

Several teens suggested the natural world in general was more relaxing. In the second interview JJ said it was easier to relax in a natural setting than in Sherwood Park because "the air is cleaner," and "it was just nicer and natural." JJ could not explain further but it certainly points to some deeper constructions or perceptions that should be investigated further.

JJ was the only one to suggest that he could recapture this feeling of relaxation at home. But he said he would go to a natural place.

> RBD: Why would you want to do that?
>
> JJ: Just seeing the animals in their natural habitat and, uh. The feeling or, um, nature! 'Cause usually you go back there once in a while but not very often nowdays because of school. But during summer I went back there a couple times. Just to sit around.
>
> RBD: When you go back there and sit around, what's it like?
>
> JJ: Just relaxing.
>
> RBD: Do you think or do you sleep?

JJ: I just--Aahh, it's so must better than the house. So natural and, hard to explain. Moments later JJ re-emphasized that Sherwood Park was not a place that was relaxing,

> The air just smells different. Like you can smell all the exhaust and down there it's just the pine trees and the horse shit and all that stuff. And when you come back here its like gravel and cigarette butts and... It's just, it's all manmade. Like you can't go anywhere without seeing a car or anything.

That civilization was busy has been mentioned already. Nature, conversely, was not busy, or at least not in the same way. There were too many people in the city or Sherwood Park, said Gary and Danny. It was noisy and there were people running into you, said JJ. Roads and cars and the fast pace were mentioned by Gary, Danny, Kenneth, Peter and JJ.

Part of the benefit of going on a wilderness trip was to get away from the busyness of the city and their personal lives for a while. For example, JJ said he liked "being out secluded from all modern day stuff like the TV and the radio."

Mackenzie articulated the feeling of relaxation while in a natural setting and made it seem like the busyness of home was an inhibitor to this feeling. For example, in the first interview she said she felt very relaxed in a natural setting. "There's nothing really necessary that I have to do. there's nothing really nagging me. There's nothing really calling, beckoning me to the TV or anything."

On the other hand, six months after the trip Mackenzie said, "I'm perfectly content being chaotically busy... [Why? Because] it doesn't give me time to sit and be bored." Later in the interview, she said the trip was like home: "The busyness. Just being busy all the time and that's what we were." She clarified her statement by adding, "It was a different busyness."

Several of the teens also described how the feeling of getting away from civilization, not just the routine, and into nature was important. For Mackenzie the relaxed feel of nature came partly because she was free of things "nagging" her to do. But she also wanted to get away from people, as did Gary and Kenneth. Luke was emphatic about wanting to stay away from the characteristics of civilization described above--lots of people, disturbed and manmade environments where there was pollution and a person could not relax. JJ felt it was very good to be "away from everything like the city, the stores and stuff. Away from all material things." Bob said he couldn't get the same sense of freedom at home. It's a different feeling "because there's no movies to go to, no pizza huts..." Getting away from the manmade gives that sense of freedom, he said. Gary was glad to "be away from houses and

cars and stuff." He snorted derisively when I queried whether he liked those things. Several teens mentioned that they wanted to live 'out there.'

The Feel of Being Free

For many of the teens the trip became a chance to experience an expanded sense of freedom, as alluded to above, and personal choice. Luke brought up this feeling on the trip a couple of times. At the community meeting on Day Ten JJ was surprised that not everyone was ready to return home. He went around the circle asking each person. I recorded this exchange,

JJ: How about you Luke? [Why don't you want to go home]

LUKE: Um, I don't know. It's better than home?

GARY: Expand on that.

JJ: You live on a farm--how could it be better than home? You got trees in your backyard.

LUKE: I don't live on a farm I live on an acreage.

JJ: Still a farm.

LUKE: I don't know. Back here you can be, free. I love it. (Fieldnotes, Day Ten)

Clearly the two had different conceptions of nature and land use, and the feeling that these places helped generate. Luke's following explanation gave the impression being in a natural setting promoted his feeling of freedom. Later in the meeting, Gary and Kenneth both agreed that they too felt this feeling of freedom. He also connected it to being in the natural world, suggesting the natural world was helping him mature. Bob connected this feeling to the feeling of wilderness which, he had told me earlier on Day Ten, included the openness and chance to do what he wanted. On this day that included engaging in a water fight with other canoeists on the river, much to the wet disgust of his poor partner! Mackenzie said it was good to get away from Sherwood Park, "I've been stuck in a gym [practicing basketball] this whole summer so it's really nice for me to be out here."

After the trip many of the teens mentioned the sense of freedom. Danny said he wished to go back because, "It's nice. You're alone and do whatever you want. Well, not whatever you want but alone. No one to really tell you what to do. It's kind of a good feeling to be out there." Later in that first interview he said "out there you go to bed whenever you want to." Ironically, a typical bedtime on the trip was earlier than at home; the element of personal choice seemed to be important to him. JJ said, in the first interview, that the most relaxed time he had on the trip was during the hour solitude experience because, "You could

do whatever you wanted. You could sit there or you could move around or whatever. And there was nobody to bother you or anything like nagging at you or talking to you." JJ said he missed that feeling of "tranquility and being able to do whatever you want."

Bob also missed that feeling. Trying to describe the whatever-it-was that made nature different, Bob depicted when he would miss nature, "I'd have to say during tests. You can't get up and leave, walk around, [You] have to stay in the classroom until it's over." Danny and Mackenzie both mentioned the freedom in nature to make one's own choices. Even the trees were free, alluded Danny:

> [It was] wilderness. When you're away there's just one marked trail. Then you go off anywhere. I guess you can't really stop to camp [anyway]... But it's a place where there's trees and they let trees grow and stuff.

Mackenzie commented in the second interview that the trees in Sherwood Park are "rearranged," implying that in nature the trees are not so human controlled.

From the start the teens had input into the activities selected, daily itinerary, menu selected and other decisions. Peter specifically said being able to "have a hand in setting up what we did" was a reason for choosing the trip over other opportunities, a thought with which Kenneth and Luke concurred. Although Luke had only come to one meeting, he made a particular effort to provide well-planned meals. Danny and Gary also liked knowing they helped plan their wilderness explorations trip.

The Feel of Unfamiliarity

Another quality of nature held by the teens was that nature is unfamiliar. In the last chapter, the theme of the trip was presented as the contrary tugs of exploring this novel, challenging and out-of-their-ordinary experience and the need to maintain the familiar. Civilization is familiar. It is a place that the teens know well. Nature is a place for exploration. As a group, this difference in the feeling between the two 'places' was important.

When I mentioned to Danny in the first interview that he talked about the trip and home differently, he replied "There's wilderness out there and civilization here. It's permanent housing here and where we were you could pack up your little house and truck on to somewhere else." Then he commented that to be out there takes an adjustment. "Getting used to not having people around and cars and stuff." The trip was a novel experience and he ascribed some of this unfamiliarity to nature in general. Other participants also mentioned ways that they had to get used to the experience.

The teens also indicated that while part of the draw was the out-of-the-ordinary experience, the primary appeal was an attraction to the natural setting. The following exchange with JJ is illustrative.

JJ: It was just nicer and natural.... It was just different.

RBD: Is different important?

JJ: Different is good.

RBD: So why is different important? Why is different good?

JJ: Change is good, you gotta have a change sometimes or else you get bored of doing the same thing.

RBD: So if you'd gone downtown for twelve days--

JJ: Un-unh [as in "no"], too many people there (emphatically).

RBD: OK, so that is change, but it is not as good.

JJ: Well change for the better, away from everything like the city, the stores and stuff, away from all material things.

RBD: So why is getting away from the city and material things, why is that good in your mind?

JJ: Because you got to see what is was like before.... It was just a feeling of being there, like not many people have been there.... like the guy from California who said that we had the most beautiful place in the world probably.

One of the values JJ ascribed to the trip was "to discover something that we never knew was there before... Basically to discover uncharted land or something. To go somewhere where we haven't been before, like a different country or something." This same sense of discovery could not be present in a city adventure he said. Danny explained why the West Edmonton Mall or the "red light district" were not appealing places for an adventure trip.

Well, it would still be fun but it wouldn't be the same. It would be, hmmm... Like West Ed. would be fun but it's not the same as if I'm out in the wilderness or whatever. There's no real challenge [at West Edmonton Mall]. You've been there before, you've seen it all. You memorized the place. You know that when you're in nature everything grows and changes and stuff...

Danny depicted nature as a place that changes, therefore maintaining its unfamiliarity, but he already knew the city environment, which is static and does not compel further exploration.

Familiarity was the reason Mackenzie insisted that the canoeing portion did not feel as natural as the backpacking segment.

> I didn't even think we were in nature. Okay, we kinda were in nature on the canoeing. I don't know, water just doesn't--. I think it would have to be deeper in [-to wilderness] because I had done that [stretch of river] before so it wasn't really [like nature]. It just didn't seem 'in exploration'. (Interview One)

Mackenzie also mentioned that the last day of the backpacking portion did not feel like nature as the other days had felt. To a significant degree, this mindset was due to the familiarity from having hiked this section of trail on Day One. "It's somewhere I've seen before. The other times I didn't know what was ahead," Mackenzie said. However, she later implied as she hiked alone, and looked around, then it was nature again. The familiarity hindered the construction of these places as nature, partly because the flip side of familiar--exploration--was lacking.

Kenneth had difficulty constructing the North Saskatchewan River upon which we canoed as nature. "[I couldn't see it] so much as nature because it [the river] goes right through Edmonton." He explained that Edmonton does not have "enough nature." Later he compared the North Saskatchewan with the Fraser River in British Columbia which he had seen on a family trip right before the trip.

> KENNETH: [The North Saskatchewan didn't seem like nature] because the river was going through some cities. Cities are built on rivers. So rivers just aren't nature. The North Saskatchewan anyway. When we drove by [the Fraser], that river just looked like nature. There were trees all the way up the banks. Tree and mountain I could see everywhere and even in the car, it was nature. [I don't know if that river has] a city along the side of it. It's just knowledge of the river.
>
> RBD: The Fraser River does run into cities.
>
> KENNETH: I never seen it [do that] and I don't, I can't connect it. And it doesn't look like this. There's trees growing everywhere there and they're not growing everywhere here. So, it's different.

The North Saskatchewan is a forested river, but Kenneth suggested that his familiarity with the river--his experiential knowledge--influenced his perception of it as natural.

Kenneth gives some indication that his view of the river began to change over the canoe trip. The put-in was in the shade of a highway bridge. Kenneth said later that this fact was partly why the canoeing didn't feel like nature. The next bridge was two days later, and

he made a point at the time to comment that it felt odd that we had not seen any bridges. We talked about it in the first interview.

> KENNETH: We hadn't gone under any bridges until that one since we started out... And I thought, that's not nature. It's not a piece of nature. The bridge doesn't do anything to [my view of nature].
>
> RBD: So it wasn't the bridge that was odd, but the fact that you hadn't seen any bridges.
>
> KENNETH: Yes.

Then, the intrusion of this humanmade object brought back the old impression of the river--it flowed through Edmonton--with all the attendant familiarity, and lack of a natural feel.

Familiarity has to do with the experiential acquaintance with the item in question. For Kenneth and Mackenzie Strathcona Wilderness Centre was familiar and was not nature, unless they went far to the outskirts.

> RBD: Could you have that experience [of a natural place] out at, say, the Strathcona Wilderness Centre, if you got out on one of those trails or something?
>
> MACKENZIE: Well, like, I've been out at the Strathcona Wilderness Centre. Let's say I've never been hiking at the Strathcona Wilderness Centre, we would have to be away, like far. Like if I was camped at campsite six [a long ways out] and you feel you're in nature when its dark and you can't see anything, but when its light out it's not really, no.

Kenneth said there isn't a natural place to go around Strathcona County, not even the Strathcona Wilderness Centre.

> I've been there too many times. It's not, it's not like wilderness there like what we did. If I know the place it's not as much nature.... [Strathcona Wilderness Centre is] not nature so much because I already know it. Like when we went cross country skiing in the ski season we went out back along the wagontrail that goes on the way outskirts. Then it was like, nature, because I never remember going down there. Parts were like nature.

Kenneth also recounted a story of his elementary school days when the class went fishing in the pond. He said in that long ago time, "It was nature totally." But now, he knows that "there's canoes behind me, a dock beside me, the lodge is over there, cars parked in the parking lot." Familiarity with the place and its human developments negated Strathcona Wilderness Centre as nature. He compared it to another place,

KENNETH: I'm sure if there was a place I went out in a car and we went halfway in and turned around and went off the road a kilometre and got familiar with a place and knew every tree. That would still be nature. There's no cars parked behind the trees. But when there's cars parked right over there and there's a lodge, it's hard to see it [as nature].... Then it'd [the other place] still be nature.

This is speculation on Kenneth's part; Mackenzie refused to consider this kind of guesswork. Kenneth is contradicting his statement that "if I know a place it's not as much nature." Nonetheless, the imagery of nature still remains. Nature is unfamiliar, out there and undisturbed.

Some of the teens did not view nature as completely unfamiliar places. Both Luke and Danny describe places they have been to at least a couple of times as natural. Furthermore Danny would go back to Mt. Assiniboine. He explained why, "Because I've been there before. I kinda know [it], am familiar with it. I know I've seen it before but I want to go back there again. Because it's nice." Danny, tentative about new experiences in the outdoors, explained he would go back to a familiar place because he does not want to get lost. Balancing the familiar and unfamiliar or uncomfortable is important.

Connectedness to Nature

The participants felt something that made the natural setting an attractive place. All said it was a good place, a place they wanted to be. Several of the teens described a sense of closeness or connection with the natural world. Only Peter said he had not had this sense at some point on the trip. Many of the qualities of nature described above contributed to this sense, according to the teens. Conversely, lack of these qualities hindered the experience. The feeling in the natural world was different than that in the city.

Bob said he felt closer to nature when there were fewer people, less humanmade things. Gary responded "Probably when we were on the hike and the canoeing trip 'cause we were always around trees and stuff. That's probably when I felt closest to nature." He also said he felt a closeness the entire time in the highly pristine and spectacularly scenic region of Mt. Assiniboine and Lake Magog. "That lake, that was nature." Roads and other humanmade items and a lot of people caused him to not have a feeling of closeness with nature, he said.

Kenneth said he didn't really think about "any sort of human connections with the environment." But earlier in the interview he had described the spectacular view during the Expedition Crew's hike to the cave as a time he felt close to nature. Kenneth said simply

being out there "so long" helped develop an appreciation. Later, he said he liked it when on the water or the bushes were close together while hiking "because it was closer to nature. So much of a different feeling than here with all the streets."

Danny said he felt closest to nature on the backpacking and canoeing segments, "'Cause we were always around trees and stuff." As one of the least experienced in the outdoors, he was emphatic that he felt a closeness, "Oh yeah. Looking at the trees go by. And then walking past, walking around and seeing all these different animals on the trails. It's kinda neat."[13]

The three remaining participants--JJ, Mackenzie and Luke--expressed a sense of connection that went beyond the simple characteristics of nature. Usually gregarious, JJ had chosen to stay away from the other boys when they gathered together during the first solitude experience at Lake Magog. During the first interview he said he had sat thinking about "how it came to be."

RBD: And you felt connected to it?

JJ: Like you were supposed to be there your whole life, but you really weren't there.

RBD: What did you think of that feeling.

JJ: I liked it (very thoughtful expression and tone).

JJ said the only other time he had ever experienced that feeling was the night before this incident. He remembered sitting in the community meeting in the dark with the cryptic tones of an alpenhorn wafting across the lake. His mood was spoiled by Bob throwing rocks into the bushes and pretending it was a bear. JJ felt a sense of connection until fear got in the way. In the first interview, JJ described the value of going on the trip. After a long pause to think, he said slowly,

> I think it was to discover something that we never knew was there before. Or to relax, to have fun. Basically to discover uncharted land or something. To go somewhere where we haven't been before, like a different country or something.

The way he spoke implied he was exploring himself also. After the evening meeting on Day Six, JJ and Gary talked with me. I wrote the following in my fieldnotes,

> JJ said he was getting self-confidence because he had never hiked and he did it, and never climbed and he climbed a 150 foot cliff. Both of them said they had never backpacked, climbed, caved or gone on a river. JJ says he waterskis every weekend

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[13] The animals we saw were a deer, two toads, a marmot, a few fish and birds. Except for JJ chasing the deer for a picture, no one else mentioned the wildlife after the trip.

but this was different, and more powerful. He was learning more about himself than he would waterskiing--maybe it was nature, or maybe it was the uniqueness [of the activity to him]. But he seemed to have a stronger sense of accomplishment and perhaps sense of self from the backpacking than from the waterskiing.

He had begun thinking about issues of personal growth as he challenged himself and explored the land.

Mackenzie also felt a connection with the natural world. She commented that "It's just so beautiful [in nature] and you rarely see that beauty here [in Sherwood Park] ever. Ever? You never see it." Mackenzie felt that the beauty in such situations relaxed her and calmed her down. "I don't know what it is but it's just, just really nice." On the backpacking segment, "You just kinda bonded with nature" when non-group people were not around, she said. Mackenzie felt a strong separation from the natural world when in the van and the towns. "Basically, any signs of civilization hindered me," she said.

MACKENZIE: Like, I didn't want to come back to the van.... I didn't really want to go because--- I don't know. I didn't want to go back to civilization because you were closed in again.

RBD: When you were in the van?

MACKENZIE: Yeah.

RBD: Is that part of the difference between civilization and nature--the closed in feeling?

MACKENZIE: Hmmm, I don't now. Maybe. Yeah, maybe. I couldn't say for sure. Because I've never been out in the boonies and closed in.

The van made her feel separated from the natural world. So did the tent, which is why she slept outside of both it and the tarp. It gave a closed in feeling. The connection with the natural world was a big reason she chose to sleep outside. "There was a time [I felt connected to the natural world]... when we were sleeping outside. Not in the tarp or anything. Just outside." These incidents combined to give Mackenzie a feeling of closeness to nature. She seems to describe this closeness to nature as a sense that arcs through the experience rather than being located in specific incidents.

Luke also felt a closeness to the natural world. He spoke with me about it on the trip several times. In the dark of the campsite on Day Five he described how he believed he was getting more responsible. Then continued,

LUKE: But it's something with the outdoors 'cause it doesn't happen at home. I think it's maybe nature--some power. You know how they say there's some power, I don't know what it is but---Maybe it's because I don't want this to become that.

RBD: You don't want this to become that?

LUKE: This, like this (gestures with arm sweep to include surroundings), to become all sloppy and--I don't know what it is. I honestly don't. Maybe at the end of this trip I'll find out. But I really should get to bed. (Fieldnotes, Day Five)

The sense that the experience in the natural world was influencing him and helping him mature was important to Luke. He expressed this numerous times in the interviews, comparing it with his experience in the city environment. In addition, Luke's abrupt ending of the discussion above is indicative of the tacit norm that deliberate appreciation of nature was peculiar. He seemed slightly embarrassed to describe his view. Luke was equally apologetic at other times when mentioning the powerful feeling of the natural world. In the second interview he described an incident during a recent trip,

LUKE: I like the beauty of nature. That's most breathtaking to see. I just love that. I want to be it, be part of it. I remember going to [a place in British Columbia] when I was a little kid. I always wanted to be part of it. If I came back I'd want to be that hill. Kind of thing, you know what I mean? I wanna be it, kind of--. I feel a really strong, um, to want to be that thing. I don't know, it's just something-- (dwindled off).

RBD: You want to be that hill. What do you mean by that?

LUKE: Well, especially in, um. Near Kelowna there's a bunch of rolling hills, mountains kinda. I just wish I was that. Something inside me. I don't know, it's hard to explain. It's just, I wish I could come out and just be that kind of thing. I don't know if you understand what I'm saying but just kind of- I want to be that kind of thing. If I had a job to be that rock--well, not rock but that formation. It's just something I really like. Heh. (Embarrassed.)

The feeling that Luke expressed for the natural world at times is startlingly vivid, as is the difficulty he had articulating the feeling.

Luke said he couldn't get this feeling of connection at home, even though where he lived was wooded and hilly. Later he discussed how he might try to recapture the feeling. "Memories. Just kind of like thinking about it, mostly. Like I'll probably forget most of the little details but each area is still there." Still he mentioned an uncertainty.

> If it happens it happens, if it doesn't it doesn't--that kind of thing. There's no real control.... The feeling of closeness just happens. Sometimes I'll just turn around and Wow. It just hits me. There's no provoking it or anything. It just does it.

Two factors might help, he thought. Feeling like he was the only person who had been to a place was important. He also indicated the reflective time afforded by solitude experiences helped. Ironically, on each of the two solitude opportunities Luke congregated with other boys and was not alone. One time he described how he liked being by himself and hearing the sounds of nature. Evidently the experiential reality was important--the sounds and smells were still remembered in the evocation of the experience. Luke's recollection indicates that long periods of alone time were not always necessary to promote participant appreciation of the natural world. Irregardless, some reflective time was still necessary.

Nature and Environment at Home

No Nature at Home

The teens seemed to assume that there was little or no nature at home in Strathcona County. The dichotomization of nature and civilization and the association of qualities such as undisturbed, not familiar, and 'out there' seem to reaffirm this assumption.

Bob said he thought about nature on the trip, because "I was in nature then." But he doesn't think about it here at home. He insisted that there were no places that are natural at home because he doesn't see many trees here. Danny laughed when I asked him about nature around Sherwood Park, "Heh, It's more like civilization." After saying there was no nature in Sherwood Par, Gary did acknowledged, "Yeah, maybe some birds. And some trees and grass." Kenneth speculated on canoeing the North Saskatchewan River, "If we started in Edmonton, there's like no nature anywhere. The river [here] doesn't feel like nature to me. Away from Edmonton--nothing but nature." Kenneth commented that there's "nowhere to get to nature really... There really isn't a nature place to go [around here]." And that included the Strathcona Wilderness Centre as described above in the section on nature has having the quality of being not familiar. Kenneth and Mackenzie were insistent that even with miles of wooded trails, the Strathcona Wilderness Centre's familiarity hindered their ability to experience it as natural. Either they knew Strathcona Wilderness Centre too well, or were too conscious of the illusion, that as Kenneth said "behind those trees was a parking lot."

Both Luke and Gary lived on acreages outside of town, both mentioned the trees in their backyards as part of nature. Gary explained that he liked it out there where the trip went best, and Sherwood Park the least because seeing and smelling the trees out there was

different than at home. Luke commented "When I think about nature I think about the trips." However, he also said he'd "go in the backyard because we have that big forest." Another time, however, during the trip, Luke had said the places on the trip, lumped together, "was better than home" even though, as JJ pointed out, there were trees in his yard.

JJ, living on the edge of Sherwood Park, said he would occasionally go for walks in the fields, where there were still deer, trees and other natural things. But is it natural? "It was before, 'cause last year there were no houses here at all. You could see really far back into the backfield. You could see the deer just about every morning, and not anymore--there are houses everywhere." He was the only one of the teens to suggest that he could recapture some of the feeling of nature, especially relaxation, at home. There used to be some sort of park and wooded path near Kenneth's home but a housing development was built on it. Now, he said, there is nowhere to "go to nature" near his house.

Mackenzie had made a comment that there might be nature in Sherwood Park. "But it wouldn't be the nature that I like." She explained, "Because, there's nature--like everything's almost nature, like trees and grass and stuff. But to me, the nature that I like is the mountains and the pine trees and the critters." Another time, she said wildflowers, while nice, were not as much like nature as spectacular scenery.

These constructions of nature as 'out there' and not at home had an impact on the teens' environmental concern. Peter justified his minimal interest in environmental concern because, "It's not very natural here." He also said, "I believe nature should stay the way it is or we should try to keep it the way that it is." Similarly, Gary admitted he was only a little concerned about the environment, "Yeah, a little bit. I'd like that Mt. Assiniboine place to stay the same as it is." In describing during the first interview why she does not get involved in environmental causes Mackenzie remarked that it does not matter in the developed and disturbed world where she lived. Nature could be a part of the environment here, "but you'd have to cut out the cars and cement and stuff." Ironically, a blue heron had just flown over us; we had admired its dark shape silhouetted in the sunset.

"Nature doesn't really have much to do with me now" said Mackenzie, a thought that was echoed by nearly every other teen. Only Luke expressed a continuing interest in outdoor activities, and at the second interview this had only started again after a five month hiatus. Mackenzie became even more active in sports, although also volunteered at the Strathcona Wilderness Centre cross-country ski program for the winter.

A number of the teens said they were too busy in their everyday lives to think about nature or the environment. There was too much else to do. Kenneth and Bob both said that

the reason they only go on Strathcona Wilderness Centre trips or do outdoor activities in the summer was because it's the only time they have available. Luke, JJ, and Kenneth all wanted to do more in the outdoors but found that other activities took precedence. Strathcona Wilderness Centre runs a teen program one night a month in the school year. "I'll have to check my schedule," said JJ when it was suggested he get involved to continue the interest in outdoor activities. "I've got football and wrestling. And rugby. And there's school besides that."

Environmental Concern

One of the important aspects of this research project was to investigate how the participants are using the experience of the trip to consider environmental issues and lifestyle at home. Care of the environment was one of the stated outcomes of the Wilderness Explorations trip. Most of the teens expressed a concern for the environment but admitted this did not translate into action. Mackenzie, among the most environmentally aware, expressed a sense of fatalism.

> I recycle here [at home] and stuff. But to me it's all a lost cause. Like picking up garbage and stuff will make it look nice but it can't really help the plants to grow and stuff. Like, is anything going to grow in this cement? I don't think so! Out at the wilderness centre and stuff, sure, I do it. Because it's the wilderness centre! I love it!

A moment later, she noticed a McDonald's hamburger wrapper sitting next to us on the concrete steps of the town park. Now embarrassed, she picked it up and threw it into the garbage can.

Effort was put forth on the trip to take care of the wilderness environment. Minimum impact camping was discussed and practiced as possible on the trip, We camped at heavily used, designated sites every night. We had fires everyday from Day Five but used wood supplied by the campground. Not cutting switchbacks and garbage pickup were standard practices. When we rolled into one river campsite and found much garbage the teens were disgusted and pitched in to clean up. On Day Two, Danny told someone not to pick the flowers. I wrote the next day,

> Yesterday when we reached the campground I insisted they read the signs on the board about alpine vegetation and restoration work. Have heard some of the teens say stuff about it, like Danny, "No, don't go all together, spread out." He said this when we returned from the lake and did not follow the trail. (Fieldnotes, Day Three)

When asked what we were doing for the environment on the trip during a morning group meeting on Day Five, "no trace" and "no impact" were listed. The group said this meant "pick up litter, spread out, don't make new trails, try not to abuse nature." The conversation had begun because of a comment JJ had made the previous day. We had held a litter pickup competition over Day Four. JJ had picked up the most trash. JJ told people he was doing it "to make it look nice," and because "the earth gives us a lot. It feels good to give back to it."

Danny said in the first interview that he had thought about JJ's latter comment for a few days on the trip and occasionally afterwards. He thought "that we should appreciate what she [nature] gives us." But when pressed, he admitted that only rarely did he think about the environment or nature. "[I] don't really have time to. [I'm] always thinking about something else." Still, in the second interview, when I asked Danny what he learned on the trip about caring for the environment he showed me the candy wrapper in his pocket from lunch. "[I] haven't littered. I used to litter sometimes but now I put it into my pocket until I go home."

As noted above Gary, Peter and Bob's environmental concern were for the wilderness settings to "remain as they are." Kenneth said he didn't think about the environment much. "I didn't notice anything wrong with it" while on the trip he said in the first interview. JJ said he had thought about the environment while on the trip. Then he moderated that opinion, "Kind of. Not really though. You think about it a couple minutes, then forget about it."

Mackenzie said that because "I'm out there it's kind of like I'm concerned.... I'm using it for survival or whatever. So, I'll take care of it and it'll take care of me." She also said her family recycles. When pressed for the reason, she had difficulty and finally settled for the following statement.

> Because it's just a waste if you don't. I don't know. It just seems stupid... but, well, recycling and reusing and stuff. It's just really high on my list. I don't know. It just seems really smart to do it.

Her family recycles, the habit is taken for granted. When I asked about minimum impact camping and the possibility of living a minimum impact lifestyle Mackenzie did not see a connection. "It's already impacted. There's nothing really you can do."

This fatalism was common. When JJ said he was concerned he added, "There's really not much one person can do about it. But if you got a group of people that have the same feelings you could do a bunch about it." Saying there was "nothing I can do about it," JJ shrugged off the house construction that had occurred near his home. Kenneth had a

similar experience with a nearby natural area. His nonchalant attitude was the same as JJ's. The strength of their construction of nature as "out there" and undisturbed may partly be due to seeing the direct effects of development. In fact JJ even had a dream like this, which he recounted in our first interview.

> One night I had a dream about me living in a house up there [at Mt. Assiniboine]. And then they started bulldozing the area around for condos and stuff. And, uh, I think I held a hostage so they wouldn't do it. I woke up the next morning and said "Oh my god!"

Several of the teens said they wanted to be more involved but just were not. "I'd like to become more concerned, but right now I'd have to say not really," said Luke. He continued shortly,

> LUKE: I see [all the cars on the road] and all the pollution. That really kind of ticks me off. I wish they'd stop that ... I wouldn't really do anything about it. I would want to, but I just don't...
>
> RBD: What keeps you from being concerned about the environment even though you say that you want to?
>
> LUKE: I don't know. Laziness I guess. Just not wanting to pick it up. It's there; it'll go away eventually, that kind of thing.

Four of the teens said their family recycles. Otherwise, the teens do little to enact their environmental awareness. "I am aware, it's just not a concern," explained Peter. This concern for the environment seemed to have little to do with the trip, nature or other experiences. When asked, every teen said the environment was 'everything,' a definition that provided little direction for further investigation or for reflective thought or action. For the most part nature and environment were not particularly connected.

Discussion and Summary

The Construction Of Nature

The teens are suggesting that nature has certain qualities. Defined mostly in comparison to civilization, nature is undisturbed, not humanmade, unfamiliar, without people, "out there," relaxing, free, and not busy. There was little or no nature at home.

One criticism of this investigation of the formulation of nature is that wilderness may be the blueprint upon which the teens constructed their conceptions. Unquestionably. The teens are using their experience on a wilderness trip. The trip was a recent life event, a substantial encounter with the outdoors and full of novel and exciting activities. Simply the

trip as the context in which I was investigating these constructions may have increased the inclination to use the wilderness as a template. But that is the point--these teens are using this experience to assist their construction of nature. In their vision of reality, this is nature. Others, with different formative experiences, will erect different conceptions in which to house nature.

Furthermore, suggesting that these qualities of nature are a sole result of the wilderness trip ignores years of experience in the teens' lives that also contribute to the participants' construction of nature. That there was little in their comments that protested this model of nature suggests that the bulk of prior experiences still maintained these characteristics. While I did not investigate stability or change in the conceptions over time, I would suggest that the teens' views of nature are sturdy and will persist with little remodelling. This assumption comes from the visible consistency between interviews, my expectations from years of working with teens, and reasonable congruity with what diverse observers have maintained are North American society's dominant paradigm regarding nature and the environment (Evernden, 1992; Nash, 1967; Wilson, 1991).

Finally, I consider it highly appropriate to consider constructs of nature in the context of the experience of a wilderness trip. Contrast makes form-defining shadows from the flat light of everyday life. Like glaciers surging out of the mountains onto the Pleistocene prairies, the extremeness of the wilderness setting sculpts the more mundane landscape of the mind into perceptible form. That the teens suggest there is little nature at home indicates the sturdiness of the idea constructed from this mold.

Although I was not trying to compare constructs between interviews, it seems moderation of some of the characteristics of nature occurred. The teens seem to be less shrill in asserting the lack of nature at home. As time passed the teens were more willing to accept that there was nature at home. They were more willing to accept wooded terrain at home, although somewhat familiar, as natural. Likely the recollection of the intensity of the trip and trip settings had waned. Equally possible, since none of these teens squeezed much time in natural settings among the other activities in which they were involved, the woods of home were now unfamiliar in comparison to school and other built environments.

Effectiveness Of The Fit

There is little or no nature at home, the teens assert. The teens are not particularly concerned about the environment. This may be partly a result of viewing nature as elsewhere. Without nature here, and a fatalistic view that civilization is already disturbed and

human fabricated, there appears to be little motivation to protect anything or change the lifestyles and structures that continue to be implicated as environmentally damaging. Nature is 'nice', but it is elsewhere; since we live here, there is little that we could or need to do there for it. This may explain, in part, why litter pickup was the crux of the environmental concern the participants developed--it is a way of maintaining the out-there-ness of nature and the illusion that humankind is not having an impact on the natural world. 'Nature as out there' cannot provide much foundation for development of an environmental ethic. Certainly a notion that human fate relies on well-functioning ecosystems would be a foreign concept.

The teens tended to define environment as 'everything.' While true in a certain sense, the question of how one protects everything begs to be asked. 'Environment as everything' is an existential relativism--without some differentiation there can be no way of reflecting ethically on lifestyles that might be more ecologically sensitive.

My argument is that this construction of nature is the one that the youth have developed through their participation in a wilderness trip, among other experiences. The wilderness program likely allowed the teens to assert constructions already sustained by the broader society. Although their construction fits their experience, this fit is not entirely satisfactory because it does not motivate the environmental awareness and concern necessary to guard this planet from further damage. However, this is the construction held by the trip participants. Wilderness leaders need to be aware of this conceptualizing and develop programs that will help steer the constructing towards more useful formulations. We will come back to this in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONSTRUCTING A PLACE FOR NATURE

Ten humans put on backpacks, grabbed paddles and went into a setting different from the built environment in which they spend the vast bulk of their days. I am not naive enough to expect that a wilderness program such as this trip will change people's entire way of thinking about something so fundamental and taken-for-granted as nature and the environment. But such a trip can still be an experience that the participants will take with them for years.

This discussion should begin by reiterating a value stance. Wilderness programs should help people learn to better care for the environment. To do otherwise is simply using the wilderness like a glorified playland, without thought for the wilderness or the earth. It is also missing a potentially powerful opportunity to help participants learn to care for the earth.

I began this study hoping to find ways in which the experience of a wilderness trip helps participants care more deeply for the earth's environment afterwards. As the project evolved it became more interesting to discern why a presumably significant wilderness experience was not leading towards the development of ecologically sensitive lifestyles. For simplicity's sake, there are three broad factors related to the trip influencing the teens. It should not be forgotten that the particicipants are also using prior experience, including the dominant North American presumptions about nature, in their knowledge-forming process. These three factors are:

1) Personal construction of nature as 'out there' and not at home.
2) The trip culture, which constrained exploration of the familiar (Nature) and supported familiar actions, i.e., to "make it like home."
3) Programmatic emphasis on the social experience rather than natural world.

This project now informs me in my wilderness program leadership. Furthermore, many of these conclusions have been the object of discussion with other trip leaders--- the peer review process in operation.

This chapter will begin with a summary of the culture that developed over the twelve days. Then it will summarize the construction of nature that the teens carried home with them. I intend to extend, rather than repeat, the conclusions of the last two chapters. Following that will be a discussion of wilderness programming with recommendations aimed toward promoting care for the environment.

The Culture That Guides Construction

The participants on the Wilderness Explorations trip created a mini-society with its own norms and ways of operating. Obviously, this creation was not done in a vacuum. The teens came out of a society, with its own entrenched social norms. This includes a worldview in which nature is objectified and something to be used for human purpose, i.e. as resources. Even viewing the natural world as a recreational resource objectifies it to serve human purposes (Wilson, 1991). In the dominant social worldview nature is inert, passive and fundamentally ignored or taken-for-granted.

In the last chapter, the construction of nature was addressed. There was variability in the meaning attached to the notion of 'nature' and different ways of relating to it among the trip participants, including Lynn and myself. However, the teens shared a sense of nature. It is full of trees and not people, natural instead of manmade, a place of relaxation rather than busy. It is undisturbed, out there where forests and mountains make you notice, a place to go to get away. It is a place to be free. Most of all, it is a place that is unfamiliar, different from what they are accustomed to in the city. As we have seen above, because nature was unfamiliar to the teens it had attraction; there was the urge to explore, but to keep it safe enough to do so without too much discomfort or fear. This exploration, through smell, sight, and/or personal reflection lead to a sense of connection, albeit fleeting, for some of the teens.

As these characteristics show, the teens tended to conceptualize nature in terms of what it was not. The teens tended to describe nature as "not civilization." Therefore, since this dichotomy was established by the members of the culture, it is not inappropriate to closely associate these two notions with the two sides of the explore--familiar tension which served as the underlying theme of the trip (see Figure 3, page 67). According to constructivist understandings of the way people know and learn, individuals categorize new experience in the light of prior experience (Robertson, 1994; Von Glaserfeld, 1991, 1995). Civilization, meaning the human habitations of which they are familiar, is the source of comparison for these teens. The contrast with 'nature' was obvious and, therefore, makes up the bulk of the qualities of nature.

This dichotomization seems to be particularly potent for the teens who had more experience in the natural world. Kenneth and Mackenzie were even more emphatic than the others that nature was a place that was not familiar. For both of these teens, the river was "not as much nature" because of its association to Edmonton or as a place they had been before. Strathcona Wilderness Centre was also not nature because they knew it.

The possibility arises that more frequent exposure to wilderness settings may reinforce the forceful dichotomy between nature and civilization. Both Kenneth and Mackenzie talked about the importance of environmental care but both also seemed to write off Sherwood Park as too disturbed or too far gone to make an effort. Clearly, this dichotomy needs addressing for wilderness programs to be effective in promoting a care for environment that is relevant at home also.

Overview of the Culture

The social experience appears to be the most important aspect of the trip for most of the teens. As the trip went on, observation of the natural world, and intentional interaction with the toads, trees and other non-group aspects of the trip decreased in frequency and intensity. For this reason, I suggest that the social experience hindered the experiencing of the natural world.

The importance of the group may have been because the participants were teens, at the age when the peer group has a very large influence. It may also have been because the group was a more familiar component of everyday life at home. Most people have far more practice being with other humans. In the unfamiliar and unique environment that the wilderness is for most people, the group seemed to be a bastion of familiarity and stability. The group can provide an anchor to everyday life. This recognition is a component of most adventure education (Rydberg, 1985; Walsh and Golins, 1976).

The importance of the group on the trip seemed to be as a stabilizing force in the new and unfamiliar reality of the wilderness. Many of the actions of the members of the group can be understood as an attempt to balance between maintaining the familiar and exploring the unfamiliar. The group in this case was part of the familiar side of the tension and became in many respects the haven for keeping the experience comfortable enough for the members.

A number of group norms developed. First, there was emphasis to "stay together." In essence staying together was a way for the group to explore together but also keep it safe. Other researchers have noted that cooperation is often needed on wilderness programs to achieve comfort (Henderson and Bialeschki, 1987; Hunter, 1987). But most attention to the natural world occurred apart from the group. Challenging oneself was accepted as a group norm. While challenge was good, challenge should also be by choice. Thus the teens balanced the tension, allowing neither boredom nor terror to occur.

The group provided much of the familiarity and psychological comfort by developing norms to help keep the trip fun by helping each other out and by not rocking the boat. Finally,

deliberate attention to the natural world was viewed as odd, secondary to interhuman interaction. Youth without a social scheme that supports attention to nature on the trip or environmental concern at home are not likely to go against social standards that see these interests as irrelevant.

The culture that developed on the trip influenced and guided the participants' experiences and construction of nature. Recognizing this, and the perception after the trip of nature as 'out there,' my concern as an outdoor educator becomes how to develop a trip experience that might influence a different relationship with the natural world. This study investigated this trip. We don't know how another trip experience would influence the participants differently. Nor do we know the 'best' (as if there was any one best way for all people in all circumstances) way to lead a wilderness trip. But this does suggest some possibilities to be addressed later in this chapter.

I have argued that the group experience became dominant and hindered more reflective and intentional experience of the natural world. In fact, the Wilderness Explorations trip was planned more for social interaction than for experience of the self or natural world. Community meetings were held every night. Meals were eaten together. The group camped in the same site, cramming ten people into a small space. On the other hand, planned opportunities for self-reflection were minimal. One official solo was held; other ones were organized more as an occasion than an expectation. Opportunity for observation of the natural world was as scattered 'teachable moments,' not planned program elements.

Ways The Program Helped To Make Like Home

Some responsibility for the tendency to make the trip like home is borne by the program leaders. The choice of program elements and the way they are led will influence the variety of possible constructions by the individual members. Allowing the group to be so important and the natural world to be minimized, frequent long drives, and the variety of activity types are broad ways the program contributed to making the trip like home.

Allowing convenience shopping was another way that the trip was like home. We stopped frequently at the grocery store, ostensibly to resupply. But alternative plans could have eliminated one or more of these visits. The teens also purchased scads of snack food. In the shopping, it seems likely that our societal expectation of the convenient consumerist cornucopia was reinforced. On Day Twelve Lynn awoke early, drove to another grocery and came back laden with the fixings for a feast of pancakes and fruit. A celebratory final meal

is common practice in wilderness programs but held at the trail's end may also reinforce the perception that civilization is a horn of plenty in contrast to the backcountry.

After the backpack segment we camped in developed roadside campgrounds. The participants said that these campgrounds on the river were not natural. With tables, toilets and so on, this choice was also more similar to their home experience. Danny commented on the waste of gas from driving back and forth on the canoe segment. Lynn's response was "That's the kayakers way." An ancillary message was that using such a large amount of gas was fine for recreation. The ethics of this situation were not discussed, just as most driving at home is not questioned.

When the boys returned from washing their hair or taking a shower we told them they smelled good, as if they smelled bad before the shower. After a cheesecake feast and several teens ate too much, they clamoured for maalox for upset stomachs. Wiping dishes with a towel instead of air drying, laying out meals like a kitchen table, and carrying accessory equipment in the van are other examples of how the program also operated in a fashion to make the trip like home.

Although care for environment was intended as a goal of the trip, little specific programming occurred towards this outcome. The natural setting was again a taken-for-granted component of the social experience. In this way the trip was most like home. As the teens talk about their Strathcona County lives, peers, family and other humans are an important part of the experience while natural items or even reflection about the earth is nearly ignored. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the teens constructed a home reality in which nature was not present.

Lynn also did a number of things which drew attention to the natural world through which we travelled. Her knowledge of the natural history of Alberta was excellent and she encouraged the teens to ask her questions. She pointed out toads on Day Two. Afterwards, JJ and Danny kept seeking the amphibians and mentioned the creatures after the trip. When Gary referred to a plant as "a weed" she corrected the label to "a wheatgrass." Such attention to detail may encourage a similar attention in the participants. Thus the person would know a part of the place rather than seeing it, like the mush we occasionally ate for dinner, as an assimilated whole. Lynn also encouraged a fun and a playful attitude, getting some of the teens to play games even in the rain. Playing "ring around the rosie" in the rain helped the teens enjoy the wet and mud. It also helped them become more comfortable with these conditions.

The teens liked the trip and the social interaction. Veteran leaders know how important it is to help participants maintain an appropriate level of comfort. If fear or stress get too high, enjoyment and learning may be lost or decreased (Bixler, et al., 1994; Kalisch, 1979; Walsh and Golins, 1976). It is difficult to know how keeping familiar routines may have helped to provide that comfort and safety. Lynn had a difficult equilibrium to maintain.

The Construction Of Nature

Revisiting The Homescape

Some geographers have emphasized the quality of home in human relations with place. Although Tuan (1974) indicated that home/away is the fundamental dialectic in human experience, this research suggests that these teens worked to recreate Home, or at least home-like ways of functioning, while away. Porteous (1990, p. 128) noted that "the strongest instinct is to go home again." While the teens wanted to go back to home in Strathcona County, not all felt this desire strongly. A common reaction among the teens was that they were becoming comfortable in this setting. Partly they were recreating a measure of homelikeness. But some had also begun to be genuinely comfortable with some new ways of functioning.

Nature became more 'homelike' such that many wanted to return again after the trip and some wanted to live there. This indicates that the teens recognized something in nature that they liked and that drew them back. Yet it is highly unlikely that any of them will ever live in nature. Furthermore, to so inhabit it, may destroy the very qualities of unfamiliar, undisturbed, and so on which are fundamental to the construction of nature. Finally, the effort to 'make it like home' also seems like an attempt to domesticate nature, another effort by humans to manage and control the earth. For these reasons, this 'home' is uninhabited.

Nature as 'home' has distinct problems. When home is conceptualized as a place of safety and security, which for many people it is not, this belies the relative harshness of actually living there. On the trip we took our food, clothing, equipment and fuel from outside the places we visited. We only passed through. Wilson (1991) notes that Native people experience nature as home, meaning they live in it and it provides their needs. Aboriginal people tend not to see the wilderness as such, living on the land gives it a much different character (Raffan, 1992). It is not another place "out there," it truly is where they live, namely home. Wilson uses this to indicate western society can learn much from aboriginal people.

But a romanticized back-to-the-land notion is not practical for the vast numbers of people on our continent, much less the exploding metropolises around the planet. A certain

economy of scale is presently used to feed and sustain the human population. Such romanticism also perpetrates a classism. Only a relative minority can spend the money, effort or time to learn the skills necessary to 'get back to nature.'

For these teens, the home metaphor seems to convey a sense of caretaking. They were relatively careful with litter, a form of housekeeping. All agreed after the trip on the need to take care of the wilderness and nature. JJ even recounted a dream, about protecting Mt. Assiniboine from bulldozers, that indicates a proprietary identification with the place.

But real housekeeping will necessitate much more active environmental concern. The effects of cities and people far away impact wilderness areas and mountain vastnesses. Ecological systems are much more connected than boundaries on a map would indicate, necessitating protection and environmental concern that goes beyond the backcountry into the frontcountry. And that is an ethic that does not seem to have transferred to the participants.

The metaphor of home does indicate a community of life. Most environmental ethicists indicate humans must recognize themselves in this community and act thusly. Leopold's Sand County injunction on ecological morality comes home, so to speak, to us here: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." In this sense, the establishment of acceptable 'social' constructions fits that of the ecological community not just the human one. Since meanings are context bound, if we expand the context to include moral consideration of the nonhuman world the construction of nature described by the participants on the trip is found to be wanting. However, the observation that the teens made the trip like home is founded to a large extent on the primacy of the social interaction. A broader recognition of the integrity of the whole community of life, and humans in it, was not part of this wilderness trip.

The incidents these participants describe as a time of 'closeness with nature' are characterized by less interaction with other humans. A few members of the group might be tolerated but not other people or indications of such. This does bring up the question of whether we can fully experience the natural world without periods away from people? Yet, much of the sense of place literature seems to focus on community relations--those relations among human persons that help individuals feel affinity to their place. There seems to be a need to expand this research into relationships with elements of the natural world too. These relationships are also part of the affective bonds to place.

In the end, Tuan's dichotomy seems too simple. Life is more complex than home/away. The teens on this trip indicate that home has more nuances than a simple polarized one. The teens were ready to go home to Sherwood Park. But they tended to make the trip homelike also. Finally, if the earth is perceived as our home we can never be away, although many people certainly feel such alienation. On the other hand, if we experience such an separation from the earth, this "home" once again is uninhabited.

Nature not a Place but a PLACE

Nature was hard for the teens to describe, perhaps owing to its taken-for-granted character. It is buried deep in the landscape of the mind. By constructing nature in opposition to something else the teens have made it an abstraction--real places have contradictions. Although at first several teens said Magog Lake was very natural, after considering other people, the backcountry development and the lodges, they had more difficulty characterizing it so. The same certainly occurred with the river, especially after a powerboat roared past on the second day of canoeing or when a bridge was passed under.

As we have seen, the "feel of nature" was important for the teens in their building a construction of nature. A synonym for feel is 'sense.' This brings us back to the notion of a sense of place. In its essence for the teens, nature was not a specific place. Although associated with certain locations such as Marvel Lake or the North Saskatchewan River, nature is in their minds. The teens still spoke of nature in terms usually used for places. Nature was located, although that location was somewhere else. It was a 'Place' that had certain qualities regarding people (few, if any), and other physical objects (should have trees but not humanmade stuff). It had an affective quality as somewhere to explore, relax, and get away. It is somewhere you go to. Nature was part of the inner world of the person, the *paysage interieur*.

Speculating that the teens conceptualize nature as a Place requires comparison with the sense of place literature reviewed earlier. Many of the characteristics noted do fit this Place. Raffan (1992, p. 21) characterizes a sense of place as "a quality of space that lives in the minds and emotions of people who live there." Certainly, the teens describe a set of qualities of nature that incorporates intellectual and affective characteristics. The teens on the Wilderness Explorations trip only lived on the trip for a few days, but have an entire lifetime of experience to draw upon. They were constantly moving on the trip, thus they draw upon a collage of places with which to conceptualize nature. Raffan unfairly limits a definition of sense of place to residents; certainly even visitors can get a sense, particularly if it lives

inside a person's mind, as humanistic geographers imply. To limit sense of place to residents implies that there is a definitive sense, a single reality, that people will acquire if they only stick around long enough. But many of the people most passionately committed to environmental causes itinerant from place to place. This seems to point at the possibility of a more global sense of place, like Aberley's comment above (p. 17), in which the person links hisor her self with a broader care for nature, the earth, or places.

Raffan summarily dismisses traveller's accounts as more representative of the traveller than the land itself. I am hard pressed to understand how two residents--say, a logger and a birdwatching pharmacist--would not bring their expectations to the land upon which they live, work and play, and thereby develop differing sense of the place. As Porteous (1990, p. 28) notes, "the land exists but the *scape* is a projection of the human conscious (italics in original)." These teens seem to be projecting nature as a Place, constructed in the experience of wilderness. That the construction is relatively stable in their home life after the trip, and results in nature being "out there" and not present at home indicates the meaningfulness of the conceptualization of nature as Place.

Raffan's four typifications of the connection between people and the land appear to be present with the teens. The teens told stories about adventures on the trip--the narrative and experiential categories. The plot lines that tied these highlights together tended to be the outdoors and how these adventures could not have taken place in civilization. The teens tended not to name the places specifically--the toponymic category--except as The-Lake-Where-JJ-Caught-the-Fish or Where-Mackenzie-Tipped-and-I-Gave-Her-My-Shirt. Perhaps with more time these might have become shortened to Handfishing Lake or Mackenzie's Rapids. But the nonspecificity of the naming process might also be a reflection of nature as an abstraction. Raffan's fourth category--the numinous--is also evident in the feelings of closeness that several participants related: "Like you were supposed to be there," said JJ; "I wanted to be that hill," mused Luke. Although none of these teens had to rely on the land for survival--a crucial component of Raffan's observations--their sense of nature has similarities with that described by Raffan.

Porteous does not specifically look at nature as one of his metaphorical landscapes of the mind. However, many of the positive traits associated with childscape (exploring), inscape (meaningful experiences and recognition of beauty), homescape, and sound- and smellscape are evident in the teens' construction of nature. Nature, it would seem, is an idealization--the metaphorical Place in the mind.

Place–Relationship

The participants did not strongly connect with any specific place. Constant movement likely kept this from being possible. For this reason, adventure and wilderness programs will probably never achieve this type of sense of place. Nature seems to have been primarily a setting for this trip, the activities and the social interaction. But in this role, it was facilitative. As Porteous (1990) noted in his study of playgrounds, youth need places to explore. Most places in our over-built cities are either not safe enough, or too safe without the "loose parts" with which to explore and create. A dearth of imagination is an unfortunate consequence.

The wilderness, and nature by extension, was a place to explore, challenge oneself, learn one's limits and seek the unfamiliar. Nature was a place for challenge. While it may have provided the challenge there does not seem to be much evidence in the participants of an attitude of conquering. The challenge seemed to be one of the individual challenging him or herself rather than challenging nature itself. JJ described what he saw as one of the values of the trip.

> I think [the value of the trip] was to discover something that we never knew was there before... Basically to discover uncharted land or something. To go somewhere where we haven't been before, like a different country or something.

JJ expressed this exploration in a manner that hints at other levels of discovery. The *paysage interieur*, can also be a place to explore. 'Sense of place' also implies a sense of being, an awareness of oneself and relations with other parts that constitute the place.

A mindset, different from that of civilization, was described by the teens in the wilderness. In a sense, nature and civilization were two different realities, that did not mesh well together. This wilderness mindset was easy to lose. The feel of nature was a mental state that thoughts of manmade or artificial items, like the van, caused a person to lose. The ease with which participants found themselves sliding back to a civilization mindset--testified to by the frequent talk about home, chasing girls, use of deodorant, worry about smell or looks--indicates how easy it is return to a familiar mindset. It seems appropriate to propose that to really experience the natural world humans need as full an immersion into it as possible. Thus the program hindered this sense of nature by being segmented, activity oriented and not providing solitary opportunities.

The sense of place literature surveyed here has focused on attachment as a function of time. The potential exists for nature to be more than just a set piece on a wilderness trip like this. Several teens mentioned a feeling of closeness or connection, however fleeting. The wilderness trip was not long in duration but it had its powerful moments. Therefore, the

effect may have been stronger than mere length of time would suggest. Furthermore, this potential for a powerful effect might be enhanced because of the underlying assumption (common to most adventure programs and explicitly stated by Lynn on this and other Strathcona Wilderness Centre trips) that a participant will learn about him or herself. Thus a short-term experience may have more potential for developing a sense of place than a longer period of unreflective residence.

It is possible that this attachment may be a function of other dimensions than time. One example might be type of landscape--JJ, Mackenzie and several others felt a greater connection with the mountain terrain, while Bob liked the river. I feel a greater affinity for desert and mountain than for river or forest places. Another possible influence might be personal harmony--Mackenzie described a sense of closeness when in a better state of mind than when all stressed inside.

This, as well as other examples of a sense of connection, hint that the personal growth of the person was pulled into relationship with this thing called nature. Belonging there, being the hill, and competition with the land drawing the person closer are all instances where the person's self was in relationship with the Place, and the self was being affected. The teens described a value of the trip as "getting away", but there also seems to be a purposeful, although mostly unrecognized, movement toward something more fundamental. This sense of Place provides a direction for personal growth. Conceptualizing nature as Place may be a useful way of developing an environmental ethic if the dichotomy between human and the rest of the earth can be broken down so people see nature as something our civilization is founded in. Abram (1985) writes about a similar conceptualizing. The possibility is demonstrated in this study by the sense of closeness described by several participants. Such an approach links the self, others, and Place--the three cares of the trip. Outdoor education would do well to help people develop this compassionate sense of place.[14] Helping people to experience themselves as part of a larger whole is what Fox (1991) refers to as a *trans*personal ecology. Within such a web of relationships, individualism hinders fulfilment (Fay, 1986; Robbottom and Hart, 1995). This is true of the individualism of the solitary person, and the collective individualism of a species that perceives itself as different and separate from the rest of creation.

Place has more meaning than just the external location. But since a person bases his or her knowledge on experience, place is not simply an internal construction. Place would

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[14]Credit belongs to Brent Cuthbertson for coining this term.

seem to be the locale of the intersection between an extant exterior (which would be solely an empirical 'reality') and the internal mental operations (which would be entirely constructed from imagination). This suggests the land itself has impact. Nature is not simply a backdrop but plays an interactive role. Is this legitimate without postulating teleological intentionality on the part of the land? Consider that the city, built as it is predominantly of sand reconstituted in glass and cement, is not nature. Consider also that the mountains and rivers had more impact than Elk Island National Park would, said Gary, although ostensibly all the characteristics of nature would be present in both places. Suggesting that the construction of nature is not entirely internal or entirely external of a person moves the topic into relationship.

Relationship is experiential--it is best known by being in a relationship. We live in nature--it provides the foundation upon which our physical (and maybe metaphysical) existence is based. We breathe air all the time. Our buildings and all material things are made of matter that at one time was pulled from the earth as 'raw materials' and were manipulated into a different shape. Even going into the backcountry we take backpacks, stoves, food, and many other items which mediate our experience of the natural world. The dichotomy between nature and human, nature and civilization is blurry. But the teens on the trip did conceptualize their world in such distinct categories.

This categorization has implications for developing a sense of place for the city environments in which most people live. If, as the participants describe, the city is a place of busyness where they have trouble relaxing, it may be difficult to be in the mindset to appreciate, like and care for that environment. The field of environmental education should carefully consider how to help people have a more holistic sense of self and place en route to promoting care for the earth. Making explicit this link between human beings, Place (ergo, nature) and the place where they live may be one way of confronting the alienation between human society and nature. Certainly, with the construction of nature as a place 'out there,' environmental concern for *here* is not strengthened. This otherness of nature may be reinforced by the wilderness program.

Responding to Raffan's (1990) criticism of adventure programs, it appears a sense of place, as specific to a particular place, would not transfer to the participants' home locales. But given the potential to feel a connection to nature in general, a more global and less local sense of Place may develop. Wilderness programs would seem to be ideally situated to help participants develop a compassionate sense of place, since such programs often promote care for self and others. Care for others logically includes care for the air we all breathe, or

providing healthy, unpoisoned food and water for others to consume. A compassionate sense of place goes even further to extend moral consideration to the planet upon which we depend.

However, if the natural world is still perceived as 'out there' instead of part of the person's everyday reality, such a sense of place would be irrelevant. Nature is such a taken-for-granted construction that outdoor programs need to address it specifically. It cannot be assumed that participants are taking an ethic of care for the environment home simply because they have spent time in an adventure program taking place outdoors. A sense of connection to the broader world or nature was present in small doses, but too brief and sporadic to suggest it's endurance as likely. As this examination has shown, some of the cultural norms established by the group cloud the ability to hear, or at least to translate, what the mountains and river and earth are saying.

The Nature Of Construction

Constructivist epistemologies propose that learners use prior experience coupled with new experience to produce knowledge. This is a process of building an understanding of the world that is meaningful to the person. Knowledge is not a representation of the world, it is a 'fit' that makes sense to the holder of the construction (Von Glaserfeld, 1991, 1995).

Notice the circularity of the process. The teens came into the trip with prior experience with natural things and a culturally sustained understanding. On the trip they experienced nature as a setting upon which to do the activities of the trip, which fits what Evernden (1992) described as the dominant social construction of nature. Then the teens returned home with this construction of nature-as-different and nature-as-spectacular. Since it suggests that there is no nature at home they don't seek out what nature there might be. Since they do not seek it out, the construction of nature as different and "out there" is reinforced and the cycle continues. The task of environmental education, then, is to understand these constructions, engage them and help the learner change the constructions to something that will fit the earth's need (Peled, 1988; Robertson, 1994; Robbottom and Hart, 1995).

Von Glaserfeld's description of radical constructivism strongly emphasizes rational processes as the way of knowing and learning. The focus is on thinking. The mind is objectified, it is not embodied. As we have seen, in building their construction of nature, the teens relied heavily on the "feel" of nature to understand it. The interview method of data collection required them to rationally articulate what for most seemed to be part of an

underlying, maybe even subconscious, affective understanding. A sense of connection or closeness to something, the role of fatigue and dampness, the stress of a challenge are all part of the way in which they 'know' nature.

Environmental educators have long utilized "the affective domain as the gateway to learning" (Iozzi, 1989). In this study, the feel of nature found in such characteristics as relaxing, free and unfamiliar, was as important as more obviously cognitive qualities such as not humanmade, no people and trees or mountains. Constructivist teaching should be aware of the trap of privileging the rational as that may lead to "head knowledge" rather than knowledge meaningful in action. JJ described rote learning compared to meaningful learning.

> I knew a bit about [ecosystems] but I never thought about it being true... 'Cause you know how some of the stuff you see in the books, you go "oh yeah, whatever," so you don't bother listening and then when you are actually out there you are like, oh yeah, we did that [in school] a couple of years back.

The trip made the knowledge real for him.

Experiential education has been called "emotionally engaged learning" (Proudman, 1991). Knowing about pollution was not as bad as seeing it. Litter made an impact on the trip participants, even though it is ecologically inconsequential. Otherwise, perceiving that nature is undisturbed seems to hinder action for environmental care. Perhaps wilderness trips should include observation of destruction as well as beauty. The experience might weaken some of the perception of nature as an ideal Place and strengthen commitment to act. Several participants recalled smells--fire smoke, pine scent, horse droppings. These memories were meaningful and suggested that the experience of nature does not depend on learner or leader intentionality, as constructivist theorists suppose[15]. Participants can learn unconsciously. I suspect talking with the participants did not access half of what they really learned about nature from the trip. If learning occurs unconsciously, it implies that the learner does not always choose how the construction of new knowledge will occur, which is a major tenet of the constructivist approach (Von Glaserfeld, 1995). It also lays responsibility more heavily on the leader to facilitate experience so that the learner will not learn unintended messages (Hopper, 1993).[16]

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[15]For an example, see Robertson's quote on page 23 above.

[16]I have entirely ignored a whole realm of constructivist educational research prevalent in the science education field that focuses on 'misconceptions.' Since it is founded on the assumption that the learner is mistaken in their formation of new knowledge and needs to learn the right theory, thus positing a singular 'fit' construction, Von Glaserfeld pejoratively labels this 'trivial construction.'

Recommendations--Leading A Trip For Different Constructions

With an understanding of the social and personal constructions involved in the 'relationship' with nature, attention can now be turned towards instructing adventure-based wilderness programs that might effectively convey a care for the environment that the participants apply at home also. The emphasis in this section will be on programs structured similarly to the Wilderness Explorations trip. Other implications for the general field of outdoor and environmental education will follow. Essentially, this project demonstrates how nature, as a taken-for-granted component of everyday life, must be addressed specifically by leaders and participants. This would be the case on recreational programs as well as explicitly educational ones.

Educational Principles

First and foremost, adventure-based wilderness programs, especially those for youth, usually state outcomes about what participants will learn. Therefore, wilderness leaders must know and implement appropriate educational principles. There exists a body of knowledge and research into the educational effectiveness of experiential programs (Knapp, 1992; Riggins, 1986). From my experience, many practitioners do not have this knowledge. Wilderness leaders, including both Lynn and myself, are often trained in recreation programs at post-secondary institutions. Although dedicated and capable in many ways, leaders often lack basic knowledge in experiential education theory to run coherent and effective programs. This trip was an example.

Miles (1991) asserts that adventure-based wilderness programming begins in an "encounter" of place or activity and should help people understand the meaning or significance of nature to the individual and broader society. But to do this most effectively, adventure leaders must plan accordingly.

> The outdoor educator must place the wilderness experience in context for students, prepare them for their encounter with nature and then transfer the lessons learned in that encounter back to the students' home environment... Such effort [is required] if the outdoor experience is to be more than a pleasant interlude from the rigors of the classroom [or everyday life] (Miles, 1991, p. 7).

While Miles portrays the necessary steps to assure some transfer of learning, notice who is doing the work in the above quote: the teacher teaches so that the student goes away changed?

Instead, a basic experiential education cycle postulates that the learner reflects upon experience, generalizes concepts from the specifics of the experience, and then seeks to apply these concepts to a different context. Actually applying creates a new experience and the cycle continues with new learning. Jones and Pfeiffer (1979) add a step in the reflection stage called publishing. In somehow making public their reflection (whether by conversation or writing to themselves) learners will solidify the form of their reflection and make it more concrete and useable as new knowledge.

As an example, the participants on a wilderness trip might experience the wilderness, talk about it, generalize about nature, consider nature at home, and then experience home with new ideas about nature. On the Wilderness Explorations trip (and my experience with many outdoor leaders) many opportunities were missed to help participants think about nature and their relationship with the world. Often, the only discussions on the trip were during the community meeting at the end of the day; rarely was a recontextualizing (application to home) part of the process. Left until the end of the day, many potential learning opportunities were forgotten or brushed aside with the business of determining the next day's schedule and heading for bed.

Lynn walked a difficult line as the leader of a program ostensibly offered as recreation by Strathcona Wilderness Centre. However, several participants suggested they would have liked to see more opportunity for thinking provided, or to have learned more. Danny spoke for others besides himself when he said, " I like sitting down and thinking about stuff. You never get to during the day [here]--you're always thinking about other stuff and what comes next, what am I doing." (Interview two) This suggests that even on trips considered recreational trip leaders should intentionally apply experiential learning methodologies both informally and in planned program elements.

Trip leaders should be clear that they organize events--the experience is not usually the final result. The role of a leader in experiential programs is to provide opportunities for the participant to use in constructing new knowledge. My journal on Day Three expressed my frustration at a trend that I suspected would continue.

> I am a bit frustrated.... I am bothered by the lack of reflection [on activities].... Lynn leads [discussions] like she doesn't expect much depth. Asks one question and doesn't follow-up. Accepts "good" and "fun" as answers. Little probing. She has said, "This is their trip, I want to accept what they want." (Fieldnotes, Day Three)

An experienced leader can see possibilities that might be worthwhile for others. The leader should use the most effective pedagogical techniques to facilitate the learning process for the learner.

A good example of constructivist learning is the development of new ways of functioning in the backcountry. The participants took past experience, applied it to the new circumstances, and developed new and more effective ways of functioning. Leaders are in position to help learners with their experience. Of course, the leader must be careful not to do too much for the individuals or learning will not take place, especially since many trip participants have been socialized into the rote memorization and passive absorption of teaching propagated by many school systems. On the Wilderness Explorations trip Lynn helped the teens learn to cook and then learn to cook in the backcountry such that neither her nor I had to help during the last few mealtimes. Lynn kindled the desire to learn in the participants such that they exercised remarkable creativity at meals. On the other hand, she did the camp sweep for them, possibly missing an opportunity to facilitate a more thorough understanding of care for the environment. It is in application of environmental care that adventure programming falls far short (Hanna, 1995; Simpson, 1993).

Wilderness leaders have many aspects of a program to consider, including but not limited to inter- and intra-personal relations, safety, technical ability to lead activities, individual needs assessment, daily operation of the trip. Lynn said that she had learned much on this trip, her first extended trip in a leadership role. I do not criticize her except to point out that most leaders are not trained in education.

I would suggest that lack of environmental education on wilderness programs is pandemic in the adventure education field. For example, the book given to all new instructors at Pacific Crest Outward Bound School lists many different roles of the instructor, but not one talks about teaching care for the environment (Kalisch, 1979). It seems, from observing many programs and leaders, that this issue is often given less priority than group, activity or personal growth topics when curricular decisions on a trip are made. On the Wilderness Explorations trip, the group became the focus although Lynn mentioned plans, that never seemed to happen, for attention to the natural world or self-reflection.

In conclusion, process is not all. Content does matter, as we have seen in the nature/civilization dichotomy. Something will be taught and learned. Therefore, wilderness leaders on any trip have an obligation to help participants consider the world through which they travel. Von Glaserfeld (1995) asserts that teachers--and wilderness leaders are such, even on recreationally focused trips--have a role in constraining the possible knowledge

constructions. The ethics of this must, of course, be considered carefully. Leaders must also carefully probe their own knowledge and the intent of the program elements as participants experience them.

Addressing The Nature-Civilization Dichotomy

Nature is such a taken-for-granted idea that programs need to address it specifically. Leaders cannot assume participants will make application at home--much of our lives is unexamined knowledge (Schutz, 1973). Furthermore, this particular construction is counterproductive to caring for the earth. If the dichotomy is maintained, wilderness programs will have little application of ecological sensitivity when the participants leave the program and return home.

Some suggestions:

- Discuss nature, what it means to participants and how they experience it. "Do you breathe? Where does the air come from? What happens when it is polluted?"
- Address the dichotomy straight on with participants. "Are you part of nature? How do you care for something of which you are a part?" Don't add to the dichotomy.
- Discuss the 'feel' of nature. A sample reflective questioning strategy to encourage consideration of relationship with nature and environment is included below. This sequence of questions led to one of the most intense discussions I have ever witnessed on this subject among teens.

  What are the feelings you have in nature?
  What do you mean by relaxed, at peace?
  Why is it different than the feeling you have at home?
  How could you recapture these feelings at home?
  Where do you have nature at home.
  Nature is everywhere?
  Why is home so different in feeling?
  Why isn't there nature there?
  What can you do to make home more like here?
  What can you do for the environment at home?

- Review with the group the connections between this wilderness place and human habitations. Air pollution and wind patterns, recreational use of wilderness, disturbance in animal migration, land use on the edge of wilderness boundaries,

economic growth and consumerism driving resource extraction are possible topics to show participants that this place and home are not so disconnected.

- Recognize nature constructed by participants as a Place not specific to the locale. Natural history lessons may help participants observe the natural world more closely, but the specifics would not be as crucial as helping the participants connect with the natural world in general. This would be part of the application stage. Don't be afraid of a spiritual or emotional side to this connection.

Simpson (1993) suggests that minimum impact camping practices could be a vehicle for teaching broader environmental ethics. His process moves from following specific rules to understanding reasons for specific practices to participants making their own choices in varying ecological conditions, including a non-backcountry setting. Minimum impact camping may reinforce the dichotomy between humans and nature. Taking heroic measures to eliminate human impact in the backcountry suggests we do not belong to the natural order, especially since in the frontcountry no such effort is made to lessen human impact. A better ethic seems to be expected in the backcountry, but not in the places where we live.

- Discuss the notion of a minimum impact lifestyle at home.
- Help participants consider the philosophy and ethical side of minimum impact more than just knowing some of the practices. Why do we go to extremes in the wilderness and not at home?

For many trip participants, this dichotomy accurately describes the world in which they live so these topics may be a leap from one reality to a far different one. In addressing the nature/civilization dichotomy, the emphasis must be on trying to break down or modify the concept that there is no nature at home or that the wilderness is a far different reality with a set of norms that do not have any application to the participants' home reality.

Addressing The Program

Leaders need to consider carefully how their leadership and the program itself sends messages to participants. Leaders will have a large influence on the group formation, especially in the initial stages. For example, the program of the Wilderness Explorations trip tended to emphasize the group, as many adventure programs do. Attention to the natural world tended to be minimized. If care for the earth is also a goal this study suggests the group must be less of a focus.

- De-emphasize the group with specific planning to counteract the tendency to stay in the group.

- Allow and encourage participants to leave the campsite or group and explore apart from the other participants. Provide opportunities to be alone.
- Empower individuals to act on their own. This is a necessary characteristic for participants in order to take action for environmental care when they return home.
- Plan activities for self-reflection and observation of the natural world.
- Carry out trip activities in a way that creates more of a sense of nature even when with the group. Expose participants to the natural world in its most pristine and undeveloped state at least part of the time. When hiking, for example, go off trail, avoid other users and developed sites. Explore by not using maps. Consider hiking without a plan or schedule. Try solo or silent hikes. Explain to participants the reason for experiencing the natural world in an unconventional way, especially when safety might be a concern or participants might try similar practices on their own.

On the Wilderness Explorations trip, the participants experienced the pull of exploring and maintaining a degree of the familiar, between nature and the group, between challenging themselves and being comfortable. Leaders need to help the group members balance these needs without letting the more familiar become primary. It seems possible that the more participants maintain of the old routines, the less they would attune to the rhythms and patterns of living in this new reality of the wilderness.

- Consider what activities, procedures or attitudes reinforce familiar ways to do things. Discuss this tendency in the group.
- Reconsider what language or thought patterns are more a part of the dominant, familiar society than of the wilderness setting. Examples would include talk of conquering, or over-use of clock time.
- Nurture exploration of the small spectacles of the natural world (i.e., flowers, insects, pebbles, forest floors) in addition to the spectacular.

Leaders may unintentionally encourage some group norms that hinder the experience of the natural world. For example, suggesting Bob or Peter 'hurry up' reinforced the norm of staying together and that attention to observing their surroundings was secondary to the group. The primacy of the social group on adventure-based wilderness programs may simply be an unexamined norm on the part of both leaders and participants. However, maintaining the familiar or action to make the trip like home may make the trip comfortable. Participants who are too uncomfortable may veer from the experience of the natural world and dwell on the familiar. Therefore,

- Help participants manage their psychological discomfort. Help them investigate the source of their discomfort. Is it the natural setting or a part of themselves?
- Discuss what individuals need to live enjoyably. What is quality of life? Does that differ at home from this setting?

In all these lifestyle examinations, leaders should respect participant opinions and recognize that the participant is engaged in making choices that are suitable for their circumstances. Constructivist pedagogies recognize that, ultimately, the learner is responsible for their own knowledge-in-action.

The Segmented Trip

On the Wilderness Explorations trip, three related elements need further consideration--the segmentation of the trip, the many activity types and the use of the van between segments. All three of these prevented the trip from being a continuous immersion in the natural world. During the trip and immediately afterwards, some of the participants felt the segmentation, van and frenetic pace of activities disrupted the experience. Over time however, the feeling of disruption waned, until by the last interview memory of the trip was as an unified experience. The segmentation, van and activities were not described as disruptive by the participants later. Still, these elements of the program were disruptive at the time. Furthermore, these elements may promote unintended messages such as the amount of driving using a great deal of gasoline.

The positive reconstruction of memories does give cause for hope that the teens gained more from the trip experience than is apparent at this time. This supports the popular hope that a seed was planted that may blossom sometime later. However, the intensity of the experience and the feel of nature also waned in the later interviews. Similar wilderness programs should reconsider how they structure the experience so as to increase the power of the experience.

Sensitivity To The Natural World

The trip became a set of activities using the wilderness as a setting. Still, the activities were a motivation for most of the teens' participation on the trip. Wilderness leaders have several options. One is to try to plan a trip to incorporate fewer activities yet still appeal to potential participants. Some exposure to natural environments appears to promote care of the environment better than no exposure (Palmer, 1992; Tanner, 1980). A second choice is to plan program elements within the activity framework to promote the connection

of the participant and the natural world. On the trip, participants spent a great deal of time learning and practicing technical skills like canoeing and climbing. Some time was spent on nontechnical or interpersonal skills, such as the community meetings. But little time was spent on developing a sensitivity to the natural world or talking about ecological issues. Unintentionally, the program contributed to de-emphasizing the natural world. Therefore, wilderness leaders could:

- Teach and practice sensitivity to the natural world with trip participants.
- Provide opportunity for solitude experiences, self reflection and observation of the natural world. Examples include solitude time, nature walks, eco-discussions, hundred centimetre hikes (microhikes), nature identification, use of magnifying glasses and many other activities.
- Discuss ethical issues regarding care of self, others and environment. How does one respect the earth?
- Consider how to explore the environment at home. Awaken participants to the possibility that they may see things at home in a new light.
- Plan specific action strategies that participants could use at home if they choose. Research indicates that individuals are more likely to take action if they know what to do (Hines, Hungerford and Tomera, 1987).
- Focus end of trip debriefs forward into the journey home, rather than backwards in review of the trip. This will aid the participant in making a connection between learning on the trip and applying the knowledge at home.

I still believe wilderness programs have dramatic potential to help participants re-form their conceptions of nature. With a constructivist approach to learning from experience, the 'curriculum' would still be facilitative and satisfying and fulfilling rather than pedantic. These teens expressed a desire to learn more. The stage was set with the three cares of self/others/environment, community meetings and pre-trip planning. Wilderness programs need to go beyond the recreational adventure, and plan specifically to assist participants toward the goal of caring for the environment. Even recreational wilderness programs have a moral obligation to teach for the mountains (and other environments) as well as in and through them, and most crucially, to facilitate this care of the environment to the everyday reality at home. Finally, it is possible that people need to voyage away to really appreciate their home "... and see it for the first time" when they return.

The Outdoor Education Field In General

The mystique of the natural world invited exploration; however, the teens do not believe that there is nature at home. This state contributes to the lack of environmental care. Some ways the field of outdoor and environmental education could reorient are thus suggested.

- Programs at home must be developed. People should be helped to look for wild nature at home not as just 'out there' in the spectacular and wilderness places..
- Remystify the city. Look for beauty and mystery in blades of grass poking through sidewalk cracks, sparrows, and frost on window panes.
- Encourage close exploration of the small items rather than just the spectacular.
- Address nature at home. It is the foundation for all life, including that in the city. Even city dwellers breathe oxygen that has just been recirculated by green plants, share carbon molecules with other organic creatures and drink water that had to come from somewhere. Explore these connections. Use experiential techniques to help individuals construct knowledge relevant to their lives.

Participants had a sense that nature had a feel that the city did not. Among other qualities, nature was relaxing, free, beautiful and not busy. To overcome this dichotomy, environmental educators could

- Develop 'urban solos' and other programs that will help participants explore the *paysage interieur* and recover this feel.
- Promote a holistic connection with place and others as part of a genuine sense of self and healthy way of living. Avoid an individualistic focus.
- Carefully discuss what individuals and groups can do to help take care of the earth.

The dichotomy of human and nature and civilization and nature has been addressed by many commentators (Armstrong and Botzler, 1993; Evernden, 1985; Nash, 1967). The presence of this dichotomy among these teens indicates it's continuing prevalence. Wilson (1991) notes that North American land use has been an either/or proposition: either total preservation or total development. Somehow our society needs to find a way of living with the land and avoid such extremes. Hiss (1991) proposes that three attitudes are needed:

> ... the sense of kinship with all life; the sense of partnership with working landscapes; and the sense of community and companionability which is traditionally fostered by villages and urban neighbourhoods.

Can a wilderness program promote this? The emphasis on the trip was very much on the community of the members. I have argued that there is potential to develop a sense of

closeness or connectedness to the natural world through such a trip. Partnership, however, will be hard to come by if nature is viewed as a Place somewhere else than where we humans live and work. Different constructions of nature and the human place are needed that address living in the land in ways that are more integrated than the total development or total preservation models predominant on this continent (Hiss, 1991; Wilson, 1991). These are issues that will take more than individualistic effort and behavioral change. The issues necessitate a component to environmental education along the lines of critical curriculum.

Critical Education

Many commentators on the environment have noted that a transformation in underlying worldview is necessary for a genuinely effective care of the environment. Prognosticators prophesy that world population growth and resource use and other human-caused environmental effects will provoke dramatic changes in the earth unless we humans stop tinkering and get serious about transforming the jalopy of our collective lives into a radically different vision.

We have considered the common ways our society and these teens constructed and related to nature. Constructivism assumes that constructs can be changed (Bannister and Fransella, 1980; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Robertson, 1994; Von Glaserfeld, 1991). To do so, individuals must be dissatisfied with old constructions (Gunstone, et al., 1988; Posner, et al., 1982). At present, the construction of nature held by the teens fits their experiential reality and continues to be supported by the society in which they live. The task for environmental educators is to help people understand that such correspondence is not sustainable in the long term. This is the venue of critical theory.

The teens are culturally influenced in their construction of nature. Similarly, Duenkel (1994) found in her study of ecologically sensitive wilderness leaders that, in order to live in society, most of them had to make adjustments in lifestyle that they knew were compromises in their ethics. The ecologically oppressive worldview, ethics and lifestyle of our society must be addressed.

The teens also recognized that there was something about nature that appealed to them differently than did civilization. Some of the teens even expressed a desire to live there. Others just liked the feel of nature. Either way, this may be seen as a recognition that the ideal conditions under which they wish to live are not found in society as it is currently structured. Critical theory is founded upon the notion that individuals and groups are societally constrained from achieving an optimal quality of life (Fay, 1986). However, most

people do not understand the structures and systems which stifle them, and often actively support these same oppressive systems. The purpose of education is to help people understand these conditions and how their liberation is tied to collectively overcoming such systems (Fay, 1986; Freire, 1970; Granberg-Michaelson, 1984; Gutierrez, 1973). Critical curricula would help the teens analyze the constructions of nature they are forming, asking how their knowledge-in-action is culturally or historically conditioned and how it might be contributing to a less than ideal life. I have argued that these constructions are not appropriate foundation for ecologically sensitive lifestyles and that such views are contributing to the destruction of the earth as fit habitation for humans.

Constuctivism has been criticized as relativistic (Ravn, 1991). Waiting for the 'natural selection' of more appropriate constructions of the human relationship with nature runs the risk of being too little too late! Ravn's suggestion of tolerating constructions relative to their closeness to an optimal condition sounds much like critical theory. But constuctivism, as an epistemology, roots its ways of knowing in the human community. Care-for-the-earth-because-it-is-good-for-humans is a step in the right direction, but ultimately this still only protects the environment as much as humans want or need the protection. Such stewardship also assumes we have the knowledge and benevolence to manage the planet properly. Instead, our species must expand the notion of community to all of the biosphere. Optimal conditions for the collective are not the same as those conditions just for the human species.

Recommendations For Further Research

Although this research project provides some suggestions, we still do not know much about relationship with nature or place, especially in short term visits. Investigation of how people's worldviews form, and interpret and promote behaviour should also occur. What are the links that put professed values and possessed lifestyle together? How do people make sense when their awareness is structurally sustained by societal institutions and mindsets? If ecological sensitivity is such a counter-cultural way of living and thinking, what factors help people buck the system? How can educators facilitate the accommodation that will help others do likewise. In other words, how can we promote a more peaceful world?

Participatory research should be another aim of research in this area. As research projects proceed, participants in this form of research will be investigating their own conceptions. Some of this occurred in this project; several participants said the process of talking with me generated thoughts they would never have examined.

More research into the experience of participants should be done. What is it about the natural world that gives it such a different feeling than the human-built environments? What is the experience that the person is having in the natural world, and why can it have such potential power? The processes of learning from experience should also be investigated, not so teachers can have better techniques to manipulate, but so that they will better appreciate some of the ways constructions form and are modified.

Research into the experience of wild nature should also be done. This research indicated that participants saw little or no nature at home. But what might happen if they were encouraged to explore the familiar environs of the place where they are from? Can the small spectacles substitute for the grand views?

Investigation into the forms of attachment that people have with their places, as well as with places in which they visit for a short time, should occur. What factors, beside long time residence, are involved in caring for a place? What is the character of the links between people and the land? How are these similar and different to the links between individuals and the human community? How does an 'ecological morality' develop? How is it like other typifications of moral development?

Research into the experiences and motivations of those people who are already trying to live ecologically sensitive lifestyles should be another priority. This may help educators appreciate how such environmental concern forms. Research into the construction of 'nature' and environment in other populations should also be done. How adults on a wilderness trip, inner-city residents, or people from other cultural backgrounds would conceptualize the natural world differently is an important research topic.

Of course, this study should be replicated to understand how other participants on other programs form their relationship with the natural world. None of the conclusions presented here are particularly surprising, nor was the program particularly noteworthy. My strongest recommendation is for researchers to delve into programs that are presenting unique and seemingly fruitful interaction with individuals and their personal and social constructions. An understanding is needed of what helps such programs facilitate such a different experience than the 'typical' program such as the one studied in this project.

CONCLUSION

We know the effects of current lifestyles on protected areas. These include impacts such as pollution, pressure for 'development,' increased resistance to additional preservation, and economic growth fuelling affluence and the desire for further recreational opportunities. It is essential for wilderness preservation that an environmental ethic be applied where people live, not just on a wilderness trip. Even more importantly, given the disintegration of the earth's ecological systems occurring on local and global scales, it is essential that more ecologically-sensitive lifestyles be lived at home.

Therefore, backcountry recreation needs to overflow into a frontcountry environmental ethic. Outfitters and organized wilderness experience providers need to thoroughly discuss this issue with their clients. It is one thing to quibble over minor details, such as the experience of litter in the backcountry while far more damaging environmental problems continue ill-noticed. Individual lifestyle change is only one aspect to resolution of the environmental problem, but likening a backcountry ethic to environmentally responsible behaviour in everyday life seems to be a moral obligation and ecological need. This study suggests that there are hindrances in the way that some experiences in wilderness are used by the participants, but does give hope that wilderness trip participants can indeed develop a sense of our place on the earth.

The participants on this particular wilderness trip returned home with a construction of nature as an abstracted Place only partly tied to specific locations. For these individuals, nature is undisturbed, without people, forested and mountainous, and where humanmade objects are few. It is relaxing and promotes a sense of freedom. Most of all, it is unfamiliar and defined in contrast to 'civilization.' With these characteristics, the teens perceive little or no nature at home. The experience of the trip emphasized the group, staying together, challenging oneself. It also discouraged attention to nature. Nature was mostly unexamined and served as a setting upon which to enact the drama of "teens interacting with teens in the wilderness." Even so, some participants felt a sense of closeness with the natural world.

In many ways, nature was a Place located in the landscape of the mind. In the *paysage interieur*, nature was favoured as a place they wanted to be, but not present where they live. It is truly uninhabited. This handling of their experience contributes to the dichotomization of nature and civilization and the limitation of ecological sensitivity in their everyday lives.

Relationship with 'nature' is an amorphous subject, and also encompasses a person's relationship with self and others. It is also a holistic subject, not to be broken down into component parts. Understanding a flower means more when it is left in an alpine meadow awash in colour, with a bumble bee hungrily buzzing by. Environmental education is intent on producing a concerned and motivated citizenry. As Peled (1989, p. 19) concludes, "An understanding of people's constructs about their environment is essential before attempting to involve them in changing or preserving their environment."

Experiential wilderness programs still offer the potential for helping participants develop a sense of the earth--the ultimate place. A compassionate sense of place is a field of care that consciously links the relationships of self, others, places and earth. There is something to be said about encountering the splendour of the natural world through wilderness experiences. There is also something deeper to behold care for the environment in the daily here-and-now--to feel a part of, and care for, the places of the trodden cement of the sidewalk, the fat worms in the garden, the wind whistling through concrete canyons, the dandelion emerging from battle with herbicides in the front lawn. It is there that care of the earth must take happen, for the earth is one interconnected Place.

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